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Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

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Dear Friends,

Greetings from Geneva. The JPIC-Office is sending you today the 6th folder with resource materials on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.

Contents:

- Poster for the World Convocation Seoul, Korea, 6-12 March, 1989, together with order form;
- "Towards an ecumenical theological affirmation on justice, peace and the integrity of creation", 1st draft for the World Convocation, Seoul 1990;
- "A Catholic Contribution to the Process of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation," Pontifical Council "Iustitia et Pax", Feb., 1989;
- Report of the inter-Orthodox consultation on "Orthodox Perspectives on Justice and Peace", Minsk, USSR, 4-12 May, 1989;
- Brief historical overview of the process on justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- A poem and a litany by Kenyon E. Wright, Scottish Council of Churches;
- How to obtain documentation on the European Ecumenical Assembly PEACE WITH JUSTICE, Basel, May 1989.

We would be glad to receive your comments, suggestions and critique.

Yours in Christ

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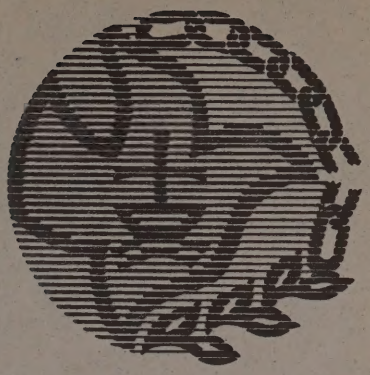

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JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Resource Materials 6.3

A Catholic Contribution to the Process of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

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I. Called by the God of the Covenant

1. The Triune God, the Father of mercy, in his benevolent plan (cf. Ep 1,9) incessantly calls all men and women to enter into a covenant with him. Such is the Good News fully accomplished in Jesus Christ, who sends from the Father the One who is the first gift made to the faithful, the Life-giving Spirit.

Through faith, the Church, which is sacrament of the intimate union of humankind with God and of the unity of all humankind, knows that its peace is rooted in the mystery of the divine Trinity (cf. Ep 6,15). For it is God who primarily gathers together, and all ecclesial gathering finds its legitimacy and meaning in this first call, to which it is our dignity to answer in obedience to faith. From there flows for the Church the duty to proclaim, in the name of the Gospel, peace and justice, to be its witness, and to remind all of the meaning of our stewardship (diakonia) over creation. To assume this task is indeed part of the specific mission of the Church which is evangelization.

The Catholic Church reaffirms here its awareness of the possibility of accomplishing this mission only in the common witnessing with all Christian sisters and brothers. "The collaboration of all Christians vividly expresses the already existing union between them, and it puts the image of the serving Christ in clearer evidence... Through this collaboration, all who believe in Christ can easily learn how to better know one another, have more esteem for one another and prepare the way to the unity of Christians" (UR 12). The Catholic Church feels herself bound by this invitation of the Second Vatican Council to collaborate with the other Churches and Christian Communities wherever it is henceforth possible. This resolve has been often reaffirmed (cf. UR 12; GS 92 and 3; SRS*) 32) and we reaffirm it in the anticipation of the World Convocation on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

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*) Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987)

2. We believe that God created all things with wisdom and love. He has made man and woman in his own image and likeness and has entrusted the world to them, so that by serving their Creator, as faithful stewards, they may reign over creation.

Thus, in entrusting this stewardship to man and woman, God has, in a certain way, established with them a first covenant. In recalling it, the Church reminds humankind of its true identity and of its vocation on earth.

3. Through sin humankind has turned away from God and his love (Gn 3,6-7). Wars, violences of all kinds, hatreds and discriminations, the accumulation of injustices, the spreading of selfishness and greed, breakdown and destruction of nature are consequences of sin. The latter - the sin of persons or structures of sin that flow from it - is a rupture of the covenant. When humankind disfigures the image of God, sin is always a bearer of death.

But God, rich in mercy (Ep 1,14) has not abandoned us to the power of death. He has unceasingly multiplied the covenants with us, manifesting each time with a new depth the immensity of his love. As upon an unshakeable rock, so is our hope of salvation founded on the manifestation of his love.

4. God so loved the world that he sent his only Son (cf. Jn 3,16), Jesus Christ, our Saviour, in whom is accomplished the fullness of salvation and through whom we receive eternal life. In him, the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last (cf. Ap 22,13; 21,6) we are a new creation. In him, we are already given all the power of salvation and the seeds of a renewed universe (Ap 21,5; Rm 8,19). The Good News of salvation is announced to the poor, deliverance to the captives, joy to the afflicted (cf. Lk 4,16-19; Is 61, 1-3). From now on, our earth, torn apart by struggles and injustices but aspiring for peace and justice, is visited by the Beatitudes of the Kingdom.

5. Christ, the image of the invisible God, the First Born of all creatures (cf. Col 1,15), has lived our human condition and restored in us and for us the image of God disfigured by sin. In the Son of God made flesh, we can contemplate the perfect model of humanity corresponding to God's will.

Moreover, "the whole creation, until this time, has been groaning in labour pains" (cf. Rm 8,22) and we wait for "new heavens and a new earth (...) where justice will dwell" (2 P 3,13) according to Christ's promise.

6. Christ, the redeemer of humankind, has accomplished God's plan by surrendering himself to death, thus manifesting the mystery of the divine "agape" and giving us the new commandment of a love that goes up to the laying down of one's life for those one loves (Jn 15,13). By

his cross and resurrection, he has destroyed death and the powers of death, and has renewed life. He unceasingly sends from the Father the Spirit who is at work in the world and achieves all sanctification.

7. Thus, by faithfully responding to the call of faith, hope and charity, the Church and each one of us draw joyful strength to commit ourselves to the witnessing and effective service to others aspiring to peace, justice and glory of the Creator who is present and acting in his Creation. Our strength is rooted in the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity and in its plan of salvation revealed in Jesus Christ. This ministry is an essential duty for all Christians.

8. We do not enter here into questions pertaining to the theological significance of this great world event for which we hope with all our heart that it may contribute to a more determined common commitment of all Christians in favour of peace, justice and the stewardship of creation.

II. In the light of God's Word

9. Clearly, God has entrusted to all of humanity a mission with regard to peace, justice and the visible creation.

This mission is only the explicitation of the commandment given at the beginning: "Let us make humankind in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground" (Gn 1,26).

It does not mean using the visible creation and other people, man or woman, for one's own profit or to the advantage of a few, but to honour the ressemblance of God the Creator which constitutes the identity itself of the human creature.

It is the harmony of the visible creation, the just relationship between individuals, individuals and society, society and society, and the full development of the created nature entrusted to men and women. "To dominate", here, does not mean "to oppress" nor "to enslave"; on the contrary it means to respect, maintain and strengthen the "good" (tob) placed by God the creator into creation, the "good" in which he rejoiced (cf. Gn 1,31).

The true and ultimate meaning of the creating act is, therefore, the harmony between beings, conscious and unconscious, entrusted to the responsability of the human being for the greatest glory of God. This is what we call justice, peace and integrity of nature. God the Creator entrusts this responsibility to the creature he made "in his own image, in the likeness of ourselves" (cf. Gn 1,26). That is what the first covenant of God with humanity is about. This is a "covenant of peace", as the prophets proclaimed.

10. When the rupture of sin occurred whose immediate consequence was to destroy this original harmony and to place the human being in a contradictory and conflictual relationship with himself, with one another (first of all with his woman partner), and with all of creation (cf. Gn 3,18-19). Peace disappeared, justice was lacking because humans killed one another (cf. Gn 4,8) and nature rebelled against itself (cf. Gn 3,17-19).

This disorder maintains and repeats itself indefinitely while getting worse through the course of history. What we see around us today is only a last manifestation that has become more dramatic perhaps because of the interdependence of the human species, of its added power of destruction and of the growing damage caused to nature.

11. But there is more to it than that. There is also, first and foremost, the wisdom and the benevolent will of God, his creative plan aiming for the "good" of his creature as "in the beginning" (cf. Gn 1,1).

In this way, successive covenants tend to reestablish harmony, peace in justice, nevertheless counting on human responsibility as in the beginning. This is the meaning of the covenant with Noah (cf. Gn 9,8 ss.), of which the sign is made in nature (the rainbow; ibid. 12,16); the covenants made with Abraham, Moses, Aaron, David. When we speak of justice, respect of nature and the overcoming of conflicts, there is always human responsibility. But the effective and compassionate initiative is uniquely divine. Human actors are either descendants of Noah, or a family among nations, or a priestly lineage, or finally, a royal lineage which summarizes and synthesizes them all.

It is the Messiah whose title is "Prince of Peace" (Is 9,5). "Uprightness will be the belt around his waist" (ibid. 11,5) and nature will be reconciled by him and in him: "No hurt, no harm will be done on all my holy mountain" (ibid. 9).

12. We recognize under these traits of the Messiah Jesus the Christ, our Lord, Son of God and Son of Man.

It is in him that the definitive covenant is fulfilled, "in his blood" (cf. Lk 22,20); or rather, he is himself the "covenant" (cf. Is 42,6). Through the same reasoning, it is in him that the harmony of creation is reestablished within itself and with God. He brings peace like a gift unique to himself, incomparable to any other peace (cf. Jn 14,27). He grants the justice which "surpasses that of the scribes" (cf. Mt 5,20) and therefore all other justice. He reconciles with his Father "all things... everything in heaven and everything on earth" (cf. Col 1,20).

But, in addition to this, he is peace, "our peace" (Ep 2,14); he became "for us...justice" (1 Co 1,30); in him is realized the "new creation" (cf. Ga 6,15).

That is to say there is not true peace, full justice, nor a truly reconciled creation except in him.

Before human responsibility, there is above all divine initiative, realized forever in Jesus Christ. This means that peace, justice and reconciliation already exist, and are once again entrusted to humankind, so that they be put into practice in daily living. These gifts of peace, justice and reconciliation are entrusted to the group of disciples who are recognized by their faith in Christ, according to the challenges of each time and place. There is no need to create this harmony from nothing; rather we must draw from the source and allow these waters to flow upon the world.

13. In this we see the vocation of the Church. God, in Jesus Christ, has entrusted it very precisely with "the Gospel of peace" (Ep 6,15). The Church proclaims and holds up, like Paul, "God's justice" "revealed" in the Gospel (Rm 1,16-17). The Church has received "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Co 5,18).

In its commitment to peace, justice and the integrity of creation, the Church is exercizing its proper ministry of evangelization. She thus serves humankind and the God who has called her. The Church does this by following the Lord to the Cross, since it is by the Cross that peace has overcome violence, that justice has triumphed over evil and that the world has been finally reconciled.

Consequently, peace, justice and respect for nature must be those of Christ; they must be situated at the level of his mission and be brought about by means worthy of the divine blessings he has brought us.

14. Peace, in this meaning, is a gift of God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, as the New Testament often repeats. Peace is specifically a gift of the resurrected Christ (cf. Jn 20,19-21). We obtain it through prayer, we commit ourselves to it by serving our neighbour, near or far; in other words by love. Peace and love cannot be separated from one another: love inspires, sustains and pursues steps towards true peace. All that opposes love, destroys peace.

The same can be said for justice: it is above all given only by God to human creature. It can not, therefore, be limited to the establishment of strictly symmetrical relations (do ut des). Justice requires a new order and the key is solidarity, in so far as it considers "the other" as "oneself" (SRS 38) and one's own good as the good of the other, according to the rule of the Acts of the Apostles (4,32). The goods of this world are, in fact, by their origin, destined for all. Thus, by serving justice, we rediscover the original intention of the creation and its harmony. For that purpose, we must overcome selfishness and the "structures of sin" created by it.

It is by love that we achieve this. The practice of justice presupposes love and ends in love.

15. The visible creation is, in its turn, submitted to sin (cf. Rm 8,20 ss.), to "futility" and even "to the slavery of corruption" (ibid.). The devastations that victimize creation are caused by our sins. "Structures of sin" put all the weight of a refined technology on a nature that can not bear it any more.

It is not an artificial order, that has to be imposed, favouring some to the detriment of others, but much more to rediscover the first meaning of creation, its "good" and its harmony of origin, thus helping in the "labour pains" that it suffers. We must look to the will of the Creator and to his commandments, to ethics and to the original meaning of the goods of this world.

It is not so much to "safeguard" an "integrity" or to salvage it, but to "use" a gift given to us, to utilize it for life and not for death, and in last instance, for "the revelation of the sons of God", for the "glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rm 8,19 ss.). This presupposes the reign of peace, of justice and of love, in one word: the kingdom of God in Christ.

16. Such are truly the mission and the ministry or stewardship (diakonia) of all the Church and of all the Churches, in union with all men and all women of good will. This is the source and motivation of our practical commitments.

We shall only succeed if we finally realize that it is in obedience to God's plan for creation, and in the light of the goal he wished to give it, that we must work for peace, justice and the good of creation. It is God's plan in Christ, communicated through the Holy Spirit, that must finally determine our choices in these three areas which, in reality, are but one.

It is the grave responsibility of Christians to proclaim "to all creatures" (cf. Mk 16,15) the very precise requirements of this plan; otherwise, there will be no peace, no justice, no world that we can inhabit with dignity.

III. Common commitment

17. As Christians of the whole world, representing the diversity of the Churches, convinced that we must advance towards that unity of the Church willed by its divine founder, we profess together, before our human brothers and sisters, our faith in God the Creator: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We profess that in Adam, in Noah, and above all in Jesus Christ - Son of God and Son of Man, "the name which is above every name" (Ph 2,9), the unique Saviour - God has made a covenant with all of humanity and with each of its members, even if they do not have knowledge of it. We profess that he offers to all a participation in the "communion" which unites the three divine Persons. We profess that he calls them all - with a particular urgency, in these times of planetary interdependency and where humanity experiences at the same time possibilities of fulfilment and unparalleled threats - to work with all their strength for the promotion of peace, justice and of the responsible dominion over creation.

We who through grace are Christians and have the boldness to articulate with humility and joy this profession of faith, commit ourselves to bear witness to it together and to collaborate actively - by prayer, by repentance, by action - to this immense and thrilling endeavour, which is at the heart of the Church's mission of the evangelization of the world and of its ministry of unselfish service to humanity (diaconia).

As we repent of all that is sin in our divisions, we commit ourselves to the deepening of the communion among ourselves: a communion resulting from baptism which has made us members of the One Body of Christ, and of our common faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ, our God and Saviour.

We commit ourselves to become more and more united witnesses of the God who is Love: the promoters of this "civilization of love" implied by all the dynamics of the Sermon on the Mount, the charter of the Kingdom.

We commit ourselves to become more and more united witnesses of the hope founded on the Word of God and, more particularly, on the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

We commit ourselves to work together for the elimination of the "structures of sin that mark the life of contemporary humanity, the promotion of structures of justice and solidarity in all the collective dimensions of existence (political, economic, social relations, culture) at the international level as much as the national, but also in our own Churches.

1. The dynamics of peace

18. For the Christian, to desire peace is above all to know how to welcome it as gift of Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 14,27). To promote it, is to proclaim that Jesus Christ is our peace (cf. Ep 2,14). It is therefore to deeply root the message of peace in the mystery of the Cross and in the hope of the Resurrection. Jesus is the Crucified and the Risen one who has greeted his disciples with these words, "peace be with you", then he showed them his hands and his side (Jn 20,21). The presence of the Risen One among us with marks of crucifixion assures us that, by him and in him, the world is wounded to be transformed (John Paul II, Speech at Assisi, 27 October, 1986). As a result there is a force of hope for the future: "If peace is possible in Christ and by Christ, it is possible among humans and by humans" (Message on the occasion of the World Day for Peace 1973).

If the dynamics of peace pass through the death and resurrection of Christ, they must also go through the stripping off of our "old self" and the putting on of the "new man" (Rm 6,6). It is by this conversion of heart, which is a work of the Spirit, that humankind will bear "fruits of life and peace" (Rm 8,6). Thus transformed from within, humankind become "peacemakers" (Mt 5,9).

To build a lasting and steadfast peace, the Church must therefore constantly renew its call to conversion, to the recognition of our faults and failures, to the mission of reconciliation that Christ has entrusted to us (2 Co 15,18-20). It is in a love that forgives and trusts that we shall rediscover the positive dynamics capable of transforming this world of hate and wars into a world of peace. And the love proposed to us by Christ includes the love of enemies (Lk 6,27 ss.) even to the supreme gift of one's life (Jn 15,13).

19. The struggle for peace with love as a principle for action requires us to "renounce violence as a means to achieve an end" (John Paul II, Speech at Harare, 10 September, 1988). Violence and hate are seeds that can only breed hate and violence. Non-violence has an eminently positive value that urges us to "overcome evil with good" (Rm 12,21). It thus constitutes an instrument to achieve "the great human ideal of a universal civilization of love" (John Paul II, Speech to Catholic Jurists, 6 December, 1980).

The peaceful struggle for peace requires, on the part of Christians, a recognition of what prevents its realization.

We must first recognize as major obstacles: the selfishness and indifference which breed injustice and exploitation. True peace can not be built without solidarity based on interdependence (SRS 39) and without participation of every one (John Paul II, Speech in Bolivia, 11 May, 1988).

The arms race constitutes another major obstacle to the establishment of peace. It is "a real scandal ... the scandal concerns the crying disproportion between the resources of money and intelligence dedicated to the service of death and those consecrated to the service of life" (Message of Paul VI at the IInd General Assembly of Disarmament, 1978). If the production of arms is a scandal, so is it also for the boundless trading of these arms capable of even going beyond the barriers of the blocks and above all the separation opposing North and South. Arms circulate with a quasi-absolute freedom in the different parts of the world. The trading weighs heavily on the international debt, since in some cases funds lent by developed countries - that enriches them in a shameful way - have served for the purchase of arms by the poorest countries (SRS 24).

All forms of interference to human life and all violations of the human dignity also constitute major obstacles to the promotion of peace. The Church must commit itself to always recognizing the face of Christ which presents itself under the silent form of the embryo, in the cries of a child, the distress of the oppressed, or the infirmities of old persons (cfr. Mt 25,35-41).

20. The promotion of peace inevitably passes through an education for peace and through a change in public opinion (GS 82). The Church must commit itself to dispel hatred, contempt, violence, discrimination, prejudices in the minds of people and in the media. The Church must bring about new feelings which generate a peace completely inspired by the Gospel of peace.

The building of peace requires also on the regional and international level the creation of new juridical instruments and the installation of means capable of assuring its functioning.

2. Promotion of human rights

21. In our century which - to its shame - has known crimes of war and crimes against humanity, the promotion of human rights has become one of the essential requirements of the universal conscience. In a world that still experiences so much injustice and violence, so many manifestations of the exploitation and the oppression of one human by another human, it is a remarkably positive aspect and a reason for hope in the advent of a more just and more fraternal society. We are anxious to express our admiration to all those, men and women, who, at the peril of their life or, at least, their freedom, work with courage and selflessness so that human dignity may no longer be made fun of.

We recognize with humility that some Christians have had - and still have - their share of responsibility, at least by their lack of awareness and courage concerning violations of human rights. We rejoice that it is now better understood that the rights of God are the final guarantee and the definitive foundation of human rights. We have to be witnesses of the fact that all human beings have been created "in the image and likeness of God", that they are infinitely loved by him and that they are called to salvation in Jesus Christ (cf. GS 24), and thus to attest to the eminent dignity of every human being, as fragile and poor as they may be. As a Church and as individuals we must be in the forefront of the struggle for the safeguarding and the promotion of human rights.

22. We maintain that the right to life and the right to freedom constitute the two poles around which is built the whole edifice of human rights. The right to life of every human being (even the child in his mother's womb). The right to indispensable conditions for a truly human life (satisfaction of essential needs concerning food, clothing, shelter, etc.; absolute forbidding of torture and of all degrading treatments of the human being) (cf. PT 1). Right to freedom: primarily to the freedom of thought, to the freedom of conscience and to religious freedom. Concretely the respect of religious freedom is the touchstone of the respect of other human rights (Message for the World Day for Peace 1988).

We know that great progress must still be made so that women may be duly recognized and a just place be given them in society and in the Church. We commit ourselves to work in that direction. In as much as the Church is concerned, we must take into account the praxis of Jesus and of the Apostles, and of the Pauline theology on charisms (1 Co 12) (cf. Apostolic Letter Mulieris Dignitatem).

We ask that the Church mobilize its efforts in favour of the promotion of the rights of the child. We ask that all efforts be made to ensure his psychological development and full human promotion of the child. We insist that the child make the apprenticeship of ethical responsibility, of understanding others, of dialogue and of solidarity, also of openness to Transcendance. The parents are the first concerned. The political community must help them especially when they are poor. It must recognize the right of children to education and favour its realization. It must also promote a policy of the family that recognizes the family as the fundamental cell of life in society (cf. The Charter of the Rights of the Family, Holy see, and The Charter of the Rights of the Child, United Nations).

We ask, finally, that the international community and the nations directly concerned recognize fully the collective rights of minorities, racial and ethnic, cultural and religious. We wish to forcefully recall that sense of dignity for every human being, and faith in the Word of God, make us condemn all manifestations of racism (cf. Message for the World Day for Peace 1989).

3. The preferential option for the poor.

23. The preferential option for the poor, never exclusive nor excluding, is the fruit of love: "it is a special form of priority in the exercise of Christian charity" (SRS 41). It is a communion to the solicitude of God for the poorest of his children (cf. Ex 3,7; Ps 68,11), all attentive to the prayer of those who are deprived of everything (Ps 102,18) to fulfil them with graces and blessings (Ps 147). But our love for the poor is also a requirement of our love in answer to the love of Jesus who identifies himself with all those who are unfortunate (Mt 25,31-47).

To cruel material poverty of the starving, of the homeless, of those who do not have access to medical care, is added the poverty of all the oppressed, the tortured, the exiled, and all of those who are deprived of freedom. And we must not forget all those who suffer from this moral poverty created by a society of materialism and consumerism who, in their despair, lose themselves in drugs, sex or end up in suicide. All unique and irreplaceable persons, infinitely loved by God, challenge us. Their cries must find an echo in the hearts of Christians.

24. Confronted with these different forms of poverty, the Church brings theological hope which, moreover, transforms human history. The Church does it mostly by the witnessing of love "that must be translated at all levels, in concrete actions so as to attain with firmness a series of necessary reforms" (SRS 43).

"This preferential option for the poor concerns the life of each Christian in so far as he imitates the life of Christ and it also applies to our social responsibilities and therefore to our ways of life" (SRS 42).

This option must be put into practice by a new form of community of life where each human being bears in him or her the responsibility for his or her suffering sisters or brothers. This profound fraternity in Christ must be lived in the sharing of goods according to the model of the first Christian communities (cf. Ac 2,44-45). Each Christian is, in fact, obliged by the vocation to alleviate the misery of those who suffer, not only with the "superfluous", but also with the "necessary" (SRS 31). This requirement of sharing flows simultaneously from the principle of the universal destination of goods and from the charity that urges the Christian to serve and help his neighbour (cf. Lk 10,30-37).

The new community founded on evangelical values will liberate from the "exclusive desire for profit and the craving for power" (SRS 37) by establishing solidarity and cooperation. The Church must proclaim, in season and out of season, these essential values of detachment in love.

4. Development, a new name for peace

25. "Development is the new name for peace": this startling phrase by Paul VI, taken up by John Paul II, has as its aim a better understanding of the disappearance of misery and hunger whose victims are hundreds upon hundreds of millions of human beings; it must become one of the essential objectives of contemporary humanity, it is at the same time the most urgent and most encompassing, because it has repercussions on all the world problems. It is good to realize that this request is now generally well recognized even if we are, in fact, far from sufficiently applying it.

In spite of its enormous complexity we wish to state that the task does not surpass the possibilities of a humanity that has revealed itself capable of the most extraordinary scientific and technological achievements. Serious scientific studies have established that our planet earth enjoys all the necessary resources, on condition that they be utilised judiciously and with solidarity; that, more particularly, extreme riches of some within nations as between nations, does not coexist with the extreme misery of others! Our faith in the infinite goodness of God the Creator and in his wisdom gives us a supreme confidence. The words from Deuteronomy "there will be no poor among you" (15,4) are both a promise and a commandment that we must interpret at the level of humanity as a whole. Universal solidarity in favour of development is a categorical imperative of the unity of humanity and of its fraternity in God the Creator.

We wish to point out that this ethical imperative touches on the development of every human being and of all of the human being in all dimensions: cultural, relational, religious, as well as in physological needs. It is more a matter of being than of possessing (cf. SRS 28). As a result the development of a people must not only be economical, but religious and also cultural in the widest meaning of the term.

26. Each people is first responsible for its own development, starting from its own potential and historical particularities. Other peoples must entirely respect their freedom. More particularly, peoples who are economically developed must avoid all economical, political or cultural imperialism towards it.

With respect to the indispensable solidarity of rich countries towards poor countries, it must be expressed in terms of mutual aid and even more so in terms of justice. All structures of exploitation and oppression on their part - be they due to governments or to industrial or commercial organizations - must be considered as structures of sin and must therefore disappear at the benefit of new structures that are creators of a new world economic order and of solidarity.

27. Both justice and solidarity demand that the quesiton of the international debt receive solutions permitting the poor peoples concerned not only to not experience an unbearable economic recession, but also to advance on the way to an authentic development (cf. For an ethical approach to the international debt, Pontifical Commission "Iustitia et Pax"). The situation of international imbalance demand in-depth reforms: "the reform of the international commercial system, burdened by protectionism and by growing bilateralism; the reform or the international monetary and financial system, of which we agree today to recognize its insufficiency; the problem of technological exchanges and of their proper usage; the necessity to revise the structure of the existing International Organizations, in the framework of an international juridical order" (SRS 43).

28. We add this essential request: that contemporary humanity may reverse the actual priority given to military spending which mobilizes fantastic sums of money consecrated to machines of death, in search for an ever fleeting security, to the benefit of the joint cooperation for development. It could in this way pick up the great challenges of our times. Such is, in any case, its duty: that of our universal interhuman solidarity. Such are also its opportunities: not only that of its survival, but much more that of the great benefit for all of a more just and interdependent world, where no one would lack what is necessary for them. The dynamics of love and hope coming to us from God in Jesus Christ urges us to work with courage, patience and even enthusiasm so that contemporary humanity may pick up the great challenge of peace and solidarity.

5. The ecological problem

29. Economic and technical developments based on the sole criteria of quantitative growth and of productivity cause great damages to the totality of nature and to its delicate ecological balances. We are just barely beginning to become conscious of the disaster threatening us. Problems have taken a planetary dimension: we need only think about those concerning pollution (sulphuric anhydride, nitrogen oxides and carbonic gazes), special wastes and their consequences on the atmosphere and the ozone layer (greenhouse effect). In an other area, abusive genetic manipulations threaten also the internal laws of Creation (cloning-chimera).

It is from God the Creator that we have received our mission to subdue the earth and all that is in it (Gn 1,28). The Church's concern for the conservation and improvement of our environment is therefore linked to this commandment of God. Consequently, "the domination of mankind over the earth is not an absolute power and, in the frame of visible nature, we are submitted not only to biological laws, but also moral laws that can not be transgressed with impunity" (SRS 34). Our ethical responsibility encompasses the whole of human activities: cultural, scientific, technical, economic, political. Each person must feel personally involved by their lifestyle in this responsibility.

30. In the exercises of this stewardship, all are jointly responsible. It can not be guided by short-term considerations or by a selfish quest. It shall rather be taken into consideration that all created goods are destined for the good of all humanity. The use of natural resources must aim for the service of the integral development of the actual and future generations (Speech by John Paul II at the United Nations Center, Nairobi, 18 August, 1985). Therefore we do not have the right to waste, in a lawless way, the limited resources of nature, to get involved in projects whose consequences are not all controlled and which can trigger irreversible processes for the environment and for the human species itself. More particularly genetic manipulations must be considered with extreme caution.

The contribution of the scientific community is indispensable for the suggesting of technical solutions to the actual ecological problems. It is a duty for political authorities to adopt, without delay, measures capable of answering this frightening challenge. The trans-frontiers dimensions of these problems requires a concerted effort at all levels, local, regional and international.

31. The task of the Church, expert in humanity, is to remind everyone of this responsibility to contribute to its awakening and to offer to the world fundamental elements of reflection, because the ecological crisis is, at its heart, of a religious and ethical nature. Creation, in fact, is a gift from God that we accept by respecting its internal law: a law of harmony. We must therefore be able to refuse developments that endanger this harmony. "Progress in the field of ecology and a growing awareness of the need to protect and conserve certain natural non-renewable resources are in harmony with the requirements of a true stewardship. God is glorified when creation serves the integral development of all the whole human family" (ibid).

Conclusion

IV. The power of prayer

32. For the Christian, the concern for peace, justice and creation is not limited to the analysis of the threats hanging over them and to the proposition, in the light of the Gospel in love and hope, of "principles of reflection", of "criteria of judgment" and of "directives for action".

In recognizing peace, justice and creation as gifts of God, wounded by human sinfulness but renewed by the death and resurrection of Christ, the Christian commitment finds its fulfilment only in the prayer of praise and intercession addressed to the Father, through the Son in the unity of the Spirit.

We have "the conviction that peace goes far beyond human efforts, particularly in the actual state of the world and, therefore, its source and manifestations must be sought in this reality far beyond us all. This is why we pray for Peace" (John Paul II, Closing Speech, Assisi 1986). And this prayer is already itself a most effective action (2 Ch 7,14; Mk 11,20-26). The prayer directed with humility and repentance to the "just" God will also be force of justice (Lk 18,7).

33. The whole creation itself is tending towards the rest of the Lord, sign of the Covenant and time for adoration. It is this adoration which confers meaning and harmony to God's work (Gn 2,2-3; Ps 94). By observing this time of praise willed by God, we celebrate the covenant. Thus time itself is consecrated to God. To sanctify the Lord's Day is, having eliminated the defilement brought about by our activity, to go back to the origins and celebrate the Resurrection of Christ. It is a sacramental anticipation of our entry into the eternal glory of God (He 4,9-11): "The glory of God is humankind fully alive; the vision of God is the glory of humankind" (Irenaeus).

The notion of the weekly rest is expanded to the sabbatical year and to the year of the Jubilee (Lv 25,8-18). Slaves were freed, debts were forgiven and everyone found himself at a new beginning

where the universe was regenerated by the Creator's own hands. The proposition of a Jubilee Year, as an act of repentance, as a fruit of love, as obedience to the commandment of God and as a new commitment of humanity in the eternal covenant sealed in Christ, constitutes a specific contribution of the Christian to the necessary promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Christ Himself invites us to celebrate the new Jubilee in Him when, officially beginning his public ministry, he proclaims: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor; he has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord (...). Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing" (Lk 4,18-22).

* * *

(March 1989)

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JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Resource Materials 6.4

ORTHODOX PERSPECTIVES ON JUSTICE AND PEACE
Minsk, USSR, 4 - 12 May, 1989

R E P O R T

Participants from various Eastern Orthodox Churches and Oriental Orthodox Churches, members of the World Council of Churches (see Appendix) from around the world gathered in the beautiful city of Minsk, capital of the Byelorussian Republic of the USSR just at the very moment when the people of this great land remembered, on the 9th of May, the 44th anniversary of the end of the involvement of the USSR in the Second World War, which is referred to here as "The Great Patriotic War". Our meeting also took place at a time of significant renewal in the political, social, civic, economic and religious structuring of the USSR. These observances and the confident spirit of anticipation for a better future served as an appropriate background for our reflection and deliberation on the inseparable issues of justice and peace in the world. We came here to consciously reflect as Orthodox Christians on these burning issues from out of the long heritage of Faith and Tradition of our Church. We anticipated contributing not only to the World Council of Churches' World Convocation on "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation" which will take place in Seoul, South Korea, 6-12 March, 1990, but also to speak to our fellow Christians and our Orthodox Churches throughout the world and to encourage their own responsible spiritual and practical involvement in the issues of justice and peace in our day and for the future of all of humankind. We reflected on these matters, having before us the results of the Third Pre-conciliar Pan-Orthodox Conference which took place in Chambésy, Switzerland, 28 October - 6 November, 1986.

I. THE WORLD SEARCHING FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE

1. In each age and time of our troubled human history, the issues of justice and peace have been experienced by people in their own concrete situations. In our time this pattern is repeated, with the added dimension that all people of the earth now face these questions together. We have consciously come to understand that we are all part of one world in which all people, nations, cultures and traditions are inextricably inter-connected. As we survey our world, we are conscious of the wide-ranging expressions of injustice and the threat to peace among us.

2. At every step in our lives today we are faced with manifestations of injustice. Some of these signs blatantly and directly threaten humanity and others lead gradually to the potential destruction of God's creation. Among the many concerns we have as we survey our condition on the threshold of the twenty-first century, we note some specific anxieties for the future of our planet and the people who live upon it, brought about by injustices perpetrated today and the consequent threat to genuine peace.

The Unjust Treatment of Planet Earth

3. The irresponsible and thoughtless misuse of natural resources creates a condition we have come to identify as the "hot house effect" upon the earth. This consists in part of the warming up of the earth's atmosphere, the thinning of the ozone layer and an increase in radiation. Connected with this are other irresponsible and unjust activities which have led to deforestation and desertification of huge areas caused by the depletion of the rain forests and many non-renewable resources. All of this and other consequences arise from the unjust treatment of the planet by human beings. It is the result of the misuse of the wisdom gained through scientific research and technological advancement. In many areas these human accomplishments bring mixed blessings. For example while genetic engineering and advances in biotechnology may be considered a blessing in therapeutic practices in medicine, they are also potential manifestations of injustice because of the threat posed in the field of mutation.

Injustice in Military Over-Emphasis

4. While we see some encouraging steps being taken by all nations in the area of limitations of armaments, we also note that nations continue to allocate a major percentage of their national budgets to arms production in the name of national security or defence. The phenomenon of the arms race and the exaggerated sale of arms continue to be imposed upon third world nations. As an illustration of this is the reported information that in some developing countries per capita public expenditure for military purposes is $US 42, while per capita public expenditure for health services amounts to only $US 11.[1]

5. Another problem, specific to the Church, is the dilemma presented by the phenomenon of Christian participation in war. The Orthodox Church unreservedly condemns war as evil. Yet it also recognizes that in the defence of the innocent and the protection of one's people from unjust attack, criminal activity and the overthrowing of oppression, it is sometines necessary, with relunctance, to resort to arms. In every case, such a decision must be taken with full consciousness of its tragic dimensions. Consequently, The Greek Fathers of the Church have never developed a "just war theory", preferring rather, to speak of the blessings and the preference for peace.

Economic Injustice

6. Injustices tend to be interconnected. The two preceding examples show that many of the nations of the world and their people have been led into new forms of economic injustice. Today's international debt crisis is the result of the mismanagement of resources both in developing and developed countries. Misdirected enthusiasm and misguided efforts in development planning in the 70's have left the world today with the following reality. In 1985, the poorest fifth of the world's population had access to 1.6% of the total world Gross National Product (GNP), and the richest fifth accounted for 74.2% of the world GNP.[2] The world is marked by an unjust distribution of goods and, more importantly, by an unjust distribution of power.

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[1] Ruth, Leger Sivard, World Military and Social Expenditures 1987-88, 12th Edition, pp. 46-47.

[2] Ibid., p. 21.

7. Similarly, evidence indicates that in many nations, both poor and rich, the concentration of wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer persons results in an increase of poverty for more and more persons. The widening of the gap between the rich and the poor is highlighted by the demographic trends of higher infant mortality and shorter life expectancy. Many people in the third world countries are deprived of basic human needs such as adequate health services, proper housing, clothing, sufficient food, and educational opportunities. In short, they lack the bare minimum for survival. While indebtedness was not the choice made by the common citizen in any country, in all these countries it is these people who suffer to enable the respective government to repay its debts.

Injustice and the Institutions of Social Life

8. These threats raise human and social problems which further increase the burden of injustice on society. A critical example is the family. This important social institution and basis of social stability and human well-being, is weakening. In many industrialized societies broken families have become a common phenomenon and in the third world societies the extended family is gradually being replaced by the nuclear family. Alienation, alcoholism, drugs, street children, child abuse, and widespread abortion are blatant manifestations of this brokenness in our society, due to economic and systematic causes. Together with these problems, new patterns have arisen in society with consequent new roles for men and women. In particular, women are now participating in social, economic, political and educational spheres of life, and yet certain traditions still continue to discriminate against them and their full participation in the life of the church and society.

9. Injustice is also manifested within and among nations and societies against people because of their race, colour, creed, ethnic identity and culture. Great numbers of people continue to suffer displacement and to live as refugees, some even within their own homelands, such as the Palestinian people. Economic and political injustice as well as various kinds of prejudice have led to the mass uprooting of people, causing migrations with all the negative consequences for personal, family and social life of these fellow human beings. We note as well that the communications media in one aspect of their expansion, through the quick dissemination of information and images bromgs people together, thus pointing to our shared destiny as one world. But at the same time much is disseminated which threatens our basic human values.

10. In all this, human rights are repeatedly being disregarded in many places throughout the world. As believers we are especially concerned with religious rights. Religious persecution and intolerance has not disappeared among us in spite of decades of ecumenical activity and concern, and in some places it has been virulently oppressive. In some situations elementary religious education is made difficult or impossible.

11. In conjunction with this, the phenomenon of proselytism among Christians is a sad witness to the world, which in practice betrays our words of brotherhood and peace. Particularly as Orthodox, we have, in the past, suffered much from proselytism in its many forms, including the uniate question. Today we see that the plague of proselytism continues in such places as the Middle East and Ethiopia, especially in the midst of crisis situations. An example of this behaviour was how relief efforts after the recent Armenian earthquake were used by some to proselytize the Armenian Orthodox Christians to abandon their Church.

12. Over all of this continues threat of nuclear war and destruction continues to hang. Demonic forces pervade and often seem to control the destiny of our earth and all the people seeking to live their lives upon it. Injustice and the ongoing threats to peace provoke cries for healing and restoration from all of humanity and from the earth itself. In response, we turn to our faith as believing Orthodox Christians for wisdom, guidance and salvation.

II. THE RESPONSE OF FAITH IN THE FACE OF INJUSTICE AND THREATS TO PEACE

13. As Orthodox Christian believers our most precious resource in the face of such terrible problems is the awaremess of God's active love and presence in history for the salvation of the world. This is communicated to us in the revelation of God as it is experienced in the life of the Church. Space does not permit us to plumb the vast resources of the Holy Tradition in order to explicate all of its potential relevancy to the issues of injustice and justice, and the demand for peace in the hearts of all right-thinking persons and nations. The experience of the saving presence of God's love for us, His creatures, has provided us with understandings, which have been theologically articulated in the teaching, creeds and affirmations of faith in the Church. From these many resources for insight in the face of injustice and the threats to peace we lift up these few affirmations for the attention of all.

14. In the Orthodox perspective the created world is the work of the Triune God. The original status of the creation expressed a communion and harmony (the biblical peace, shalom) in process of fulfillment, which finds its ground in the perfect personal relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

15. The Old and the New Testaments are records of the revelation that humankind is sick in the center of its personal existence. Through sin, which is the loss of illumination or glorification, which is alienation from God, the "heart" has been "darkened" (Rom. 1:21). Believing that this state is normal for their lives, human beings have come to make God in their own fallen or sick image. The heart is the primary organ of communion with God, which makes human beings both free of the environment and yet active participants in it. The disruption of this communion with God causes the heart to become dominated by and enslaved to the environment through confusion of its own intellectual reasoning which gives rise to self-centered love, injustice and agression in relation to others. Herein is the root cause of idolatry, injustice, exploitation and belligerance in humanity and the lack of peace among human beings.

16. For the Orthodox Church, the restoration of justice and peace cannot be measured merely by human standards, but by the Divine-human standard of Jesus Christ, who is at the heart of the "good news" to the fallen world. The Christological standard rests upon the union of the divine and the human in the one person of Jesus Christ and upon His victory over death, sin and evil through His resurrection which followed upon His own unjust suffering and crucifixion. This unique event of the just God becoming a just man in the midst of an unjust humanity, and His willingness to suffer unjustly in the hands of the unjust for their salvation is for us the profound basis not only for the understanding of justice, but also for our solidarity with all those who suffer injustice.

17. Through His death, Christ has destroyed in principle the power of sin and death, which are the primary causes of injustice, and through His resurrection, Christ has made eternal peace between God and humanity, among human beings as well as with the created world itself. This is the "new creation".

18. For the Christian, this restoration of justice and peace brings liberation of the human heart through its purification from all thoughts, both good and bad, so that it may be filled with the prayer of the Holy Spirit. This process allows it to regain full communion with God. This communion of the human with the divine is the beginning of the restoration of justice and peace, which are gifts of God to us, leading to the transformation of selfish love into selfless love. This is our participation in the mystery of the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ.

19. Participation in the mystery of the Cross is perfected by glorification, which is to see Christ resurrected in glory, together with the bestowal of perfect justice, peace and reconciliation with the Father and the gift of selfless love.

20. The fullness of justice and the establishment of peace in human relations can thus only come with this renewal in Christ and the communion with the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women. Social justice and social peace can approximate it only inasmuch as God's peace and God's justice are realized in the illumination and glorification of those who share in the common life of society. To this the life of the Church is witness.

21. The Church is the true Body of Christ. In this new ecclesial reality everything is recapitulated in Christ and the common spiritual experience of the ecclesial community removes the estrangement of individuals from each other, because it is based on an ontological unity expressed in the historical reality of the Body of Christ. The Church, as the Body of Christ, projects in space and time the historical embodiment of the Gospel and the realization of the living experience of the Christian faith.

22. But the Christian message of peace and justice goes further, to address all dimensions of human existence, thus becoming a judgment upon the world as a whole. The concern is not only with theologizing about earthly realities, but also in seeing earthly realities as God's continuing work in history through His Church and with the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

23. It is true that Christian life has not always manifested the profound reality of the prophetic and sacramental message of peace and justice in its fulness, but there is always a conscious and positive declaration of peace and justice in the ecclesial experience. In this perspective it is clear that the spiritual process of human participation in the peace and justice of Christ is a continuous spiritual struggle, in which characteristics of both the weakness of human nature and its forward movement toward God-likeness continue to rise and fall. Nevertheless Christians are mandated to work synergetically with God in His "<u>oikonomia</u>" of the eschatological restoration and transfiguration of His creation.

24. In our age, the severing of the world from the living ecclesial experience and the on-going profanation of society in modern times has challenged fundamental Christian affirmations on the relationship of God, humanity and the world. The era of ideological secularization has proclaimed a radical apostasy from these Christian affirmations. The Church is not any more the only teaching authority, because in greater or lesser measure, various ideologies declare messages antithetical to the Christian message. This spiritual dichotomy of modern society is the challenge of the age for the Church as it seeks to provide a vision of the genuine source of justice and peace for the world today. It is a vision which the world desperately needs to hear, adopt and realize in practice. The Church does this not to project upon the world its own "ideology" in the place of others, but because without the saving and redeeming participation in the justice and peace of God, all our efforts are destined to fail. It is for this reason that the vision of

the Church concerns itself with the whole human being, with the whole of social life, with the whole of the physical and spiritual environment of our planet. Ours is, finally, an eschatological vision, in which we humbly recognize that justice and peace are of God; it is He who brings it into reality. Our task is to work with God's purpose that justice and peace may reign on earth and among all people.

III. ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS RESPONDING TO THE DEMANDS OF JUSTICE AND PEACE

25. It is not enough for us simply to theologize, to describe and to prescribe regarding the Orthodox vision of justice and peace. We must also mobilize and work together for God's purpose to defeat injustices and to establish justice wherever possible, as well as to overcome the forces which threaten peace on earth. In order to realize God's peace and justice on earth, we are called as Christians always and everywhere to be "servants of God" (Rom. 6:22) and "co-workers with God" (1 Cor. 3:9) by being obedient to His will and by imitating the example of our Lord and the saints of His Church. We see this task as a clarion call to ourselves as Orthodox, first in our existence on the personal, the ecclesial and outreach levels.

The Personal Dimension

26. In our personal Christian lives, we are expected to acknowledge experientially that each Christian is called to be a peacemaker and a worker for justice in his or her personal life. Every Orthodox Christian has received the holy calling to realize and promote justice in the concrete and specific social environment in which he or she lives. This calling has been concretely received through the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation by which we have each one of us been incorporated into the Body of Christ and have begun our growth in illumination and glorification, as members of God's Royal Priesthood and Holy Nation (cf.1 Pet.2:9). Having thus received the Holy Spirit and having become children of God, we are endowed with both responsibility and power to be peacemakers and advocates of justice.

27. This calling of all Christians presupposes that we constantly stay at the source of divine peace which is possible only in the constant sacramental communion of the Church and the personal life of prayer. The prayers of the Church together with the Holy Scriptures and Holy Tradition give to each of us the right orientation and the concrete guidelines and ideals for our lives.

28. It is not always possible, however, to live up to these ideals due to our human weakness and our lack of progress in growing in illumination and toward glorification and God-likeness, which is our sin. Therefore, repentance must be a permanent attitude and stance in life for us, a reality which also belongs to the sacramental life of the Church as a normal element in its life.

29. This attitude leads Christian men and women not only to humility, but also to an ascetic approach to life, which prevents them from submission to such things as excessive consumerism, materialistic attitudes, and the greedy exploitation of others and the natural resources of earth. This perspective, as well, constantly reminds Christians of the needs of other persons who are also created in the likeness of God. According to the principles of the Christian faith, every human being should be considered by his fellow human being as a person created in God's image, and not simply as a statistical unit, or as a unit of material labour or a unit of consumption. We must relate with our fellow human being in imitation of God's philanthropic love for all of His creatures. Consequently, Christians are called always to be aware of the needs not only of fellow Christians, but of all people who are in need of the necessities of life.

30. As a result, in their personal lives, Christian men and women have to be constantly vigilent and alert to the personal and social injustices in their surroundings, injustices which are at the heart of the disturbances of peace and harmony among persons and in the social environment. We must, with the grace of God seek the gift of seeing the sin and evil present in the world. Christian men and women must also have the courage to spell out the injustices which they see, even though this might require them to make personal sacrifices. These sacrifices will include the cost of involvement and action. After all, every Christian is called to identify his or her life with that of Christ, not only in the glory of the Resurrection, but also in His suffering.

In Ecclesial Life

31. We are Christians not only in the context of secular life, but there must also be an imperative for justice and peace in our ecclesial life. Peace and justice are the essence of the gift given to us by Christ, but they are also essential aspects for the programme entrusted to us by the Lord for fulfillment as part of our contribution to the world and the society in which we live, beginning with the very life of the Church itself.

32. Certainly our ecclesial concern with peace and justice begins with our commonly shared prayer for justice and peace. Orthodox Christian men and women are called to offer constant and fervent prayers for peace, reconciliation and justice in mutual relations among people, in the Church, between nations and in all the world. Prayers for justice and peace must be made in all of our daily and Sunday services, but not only generally. We must offer to God fervent prayers for peace in specific conflict areas, for a just distribution of the material goods of life among all peoples, for the protection and comfort of those who are suffering and for the final triumph of justice and peace.

33. But there is also a need for both guidance and encouragement for the bishops and priests and laity of the Church to teach the people, preach to the congregations and inspire the youth of the Church to be sensitive to the issues of justice and peace and to address them in practical ways. We must lift up in the consciousness of the Church, the peacemaking character of Christianity and the Christian duty to serve the cause of peace and justice.

34. But in addition, we must learn to use the expertise of the the Church's members who are specialized in the areas of sociology, economics, politics, ecology, medicine, etc., in order to help raise the conscienceness and understanding of the faithful in the practical spheres of justice and peace work. It would be useful to designate one week each year throughout the world, dedicated to the issues of justice and peace. During this week, prayers, gatherings, presentations, seminars and discussions could be held with the intention of enhancing the awareness of Christians toward these issues.

35. Other corporate programmes are also needed. We can try to accomplish this through meetings held at times other than those of public worship; through the Church's periodical press in which peace and justice concerns should take a permanent place; through theological studies and the development of social ethical disciplines in all of our seminaries and theological schools; through regional, diocesan, national and international gatherings devoted to peace and justice issues in co-operation with fellow Christians of other church bodies, with non-Christian religious peoples and groups and with non-believers of good will everywhere.

36. As a Church we are called to develop sensitivity to the way we function and live out our ecclesial existence at all levels of church life. As such, it is important that we not only speak about justice and peace, but also develop projects and contribute practically in programmes and sustained organized activity on behalf of the concrete realization of the values of justice and peace in our ecclesial life. In this regard the Church must learn to dialogue especially with non-Church bodies to find the most suitable common ways for the implementation of justice and peace.

Outreach

37. The Church lives not only for itself, but also for the life of the world. There is an outreach dimension to the Christian faith which seeks to bring the saving message of the Gospel to all men and women, which in Christ's compassion seeks to meet the suffering and injustices experienced by our fellow human beings in their immediate needs for care, sustenance and protection. There is the Christian concern for the very orders and structures of the societies in which we live which oppress people, or contribute to the danger of war, or institutionalize injustice.

38. On the international level, the Orthodox commitment to justice and peace can be most effective and influential, and could give good results through our active and close co-operation with all other Christian churches within the framework of the ecumenical movement. Our membership in the World Council of Churches and participation in many similar international and regional ecumenical bodies and organizations helps to mobilize and unite all spiritual and social forces in the common struggle for justice and peace. Indeed, Christians must consider every injustice done to anyone else as a demand for their own response.

39. Justice and peace are equally necessary for all people, and because of this, under the auspices of agencies such as the United Nations, we welcome co-operation on these issues with all people of good will, irrespective of their religious and political convictions. The main and most urgent task in this sphere of activity is to reduce the danger of nuclear holocaust, which would mean, in practice, the end of life on our planet. For this, we must reverse the arms race and help the nations move from confrontation to serious and practical negotiations about disarmament and co-operation in building a world free of nuclear weapons. For this to happen, Christians can help to increase the confidence of nations regarding each other and so lead toward increased understanding and trust.

40. We welcome the positive changes in the climate of international relations in recent times and express our hope and prayers that we and all of humanity may see the end of the second millenium of the Christian era, as a victory of justice and peace for all of God's people.

41. But for this to occur, it is quite obvious that it is necessary to make profound changes in the contemporary system of social mechanisms which not only produce great misery based upon injustice and exploitation, but also, for the same reason are fraught with permanent dangers of militarism and wars, which can destroy the whole of humanity and the very life on earth.

42. In all things we put our trust for our future and that of the world in the hands of the God of justice and peace. Clement of Rome spoke of peace whose meaning, as we have seen, includes the idea of justice. We conclude with his words: ".... Let us run on to the goal of peace, which was handed down to us from the beginning. Let us fix our eyes on the Father and Creator of the universe and cling to his magnificent and excellent gifts of peace and kindness to us...." (I Clement, 19:2).

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JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Resource Materials 6.5

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS ON JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

1. BEFORE VANCOUVER

The idea of a council on peace had already been launched in 1934 by dietrich Bonhoeffer at the ecumenical assembly in Fanoe: "Once again, how will peace come ? Who will call us to peace so that the world will hear, will have to hear ? (...) Only the one great Ecumenical Council of the holy church of Christ over all the world can speak out so that the world, though it gnash its teeth, will have to hear, so that the people will rejoice because the church of Christ in the name of Christ has taken the weapons from the hands of their sons, forbidden war, proclaimed the peace of Christ against the raging world."

This idea was taken up by the churches of GDR which made a proposal in that direction at the Vancouver Assembly. Before the Assembly the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) called for a covenant for peace and justice. These various steps certainly influenced the decisions of the Vancouver Assembly. (2)

THE VANCOUVER ASSEMBLY (JULY 24 - AUGUST 10 1983)

The working group on "justice and human dignity" recommended in its final report "that the churches at all levels - congregations, dioceses/synods, networks of Christian groups and base communities - together with the WCC, enter into a covenant in a conciliar process:

- to confess Christ, the life of the world, and the Lord over the idols of our times, the Good Shepherd who 'brings life and life in its fullness' for his people and for all creation;
- to resist the demonic powers of death inherent in racism, sexism, class domination, caste oppression and militarism." (2)

The Assembly's Programme and Guidelines Committee took up that proposal and declared that "To engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of all creation should be a priority for World Council programmes. The foundation of this emphasis should be confessing Christ as the life of the world and Christian resistance to the demonic powers of death." (4)
The text repeats the examples quoted above and adds "violations of human rights, and the misuse of science and technology." The committee underlined as well "that new initiatives are needed to promote education for peace, justice

WCC WORKSHOP ON JPIC (GENEVA, MAY 20-22 1984)

A WCC workshop was held in John Knox's centre in 1984 (5) with the purpose:

- to listen to the reflection on Vancouver statements related to peace and justice from the various movements and to consult with these movements on the development of a programme of justice and peace.
- to discuss the issues of justice and peace in their complementaries and contradictions, including biblical, theological and ecclesiological aspects;
- to provide an opportunity to comment on the proposed "covenanting" process and to take first steps towards an international network-building and conciliar process of covenanting." (6)

WCC CENTRAL COMMITTEE (GENEVA, JULY 9-18 1984)

This meeting published a report on JPIC concerned primarily with the ways of joining the struggles for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. Such an initiative was presented as a response to the Vancouver call requiring a large cooperation among the various WCC's units and sub-units. The purpose of that procedure was not to create a new programme but to found our mutual covenanting for justice peace and the integrity of creation on the Covenant between God and God's people and among the churches gathered at the WCC. Moreover they decided to open this process to the other Churches and to NGO's closely connected with the churches.
The new idea was to recommend a world conference on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, possibly in 1989, which could be seen on one hand, as a forum to share experiences and points of view on these questions and, on the other, as an opportunity to deepen and to enlarge the ecumenical commitment through service in the conciliar process.

THE INFLUENCE OF CARL FRIEDRICH VON WEIZSAECKER

In June 1985, at Düsseldorf's Kirchentag, Carl Friedrich von Weizsàcker calls an urgent appeal for a "world ecumenical council on peace". He later published a book , *Die Zeit drängt* (8) in which he developped this appeal. There was a strong reaction producing a new awareness of the importance of such a commitment. Activities were undertaken in the european region, above all in Germany and Holland. The Conference of European Churches (CEC) proposed then to organize a European Assembly on "peace and justice" (sept. 1986) (9). Successively CEC and CCEE (Council of European Roman-Catholic Bishop's Conferences) organised jointly the European Ecumenical Assembly PEACE WITH JUSTICE in Basel (15-21 May 1989) with the participation of 700 delegates.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND CENTRAL COMMITTEE (BUENOS AIRES, JULY 1985)

The Central Committee held in Buenos Aires underlined that the JPIC programme carries on the programme of "the search for a

just, participatory and sustainable society (JPSS)", as well as enhancing new dimensions. From the theological point of view, the committee declared that the concept of covenant is central and underlined the importance of a covenanting process for the witness of the Churches.
The central committee made the following decisions :

- to invite collaboration with the Roman Catholic Church (through the Joint Working Group);

- to seek the support of the national and international initiatives which must be part of the preparatory activities of the JPIC World Convocation;

- to take into account the points of view of indigenous people, especially on the questions concerning creation, women and youth as well as those of people of other faiths and of the scientific community;

The Central Committee recommended as well the nomination of a consultative group on JPIC and to hire a person to work full time on JPIC including the organisation of meetings and the preparation of the World Convocation. (10)

LETTER TO THE CHURCHES AND TO THE ECUMENICAL ORGANIZATIONS

On February 20 1986, Dr. Emilio Castro wrote to the member churches, to the National Councils of Churches and to the Regional Ecumenical Organizations to inform them on the call for an ecumenical world conference on justice, peace and integrity of creation. The preparatory process was presented as a condition for the success of the world conference and also "for the next Assembly, for the deepening of the covenant relationship the churches entered into at Amsterdam in 1948 and, beyond that, for the development of fuller unity among all Christian churches and especially for the struggles for justice and peace in the world." The purpose of that letter was also to gather information on the activities undertaken in the churches or among the churches, on the local, national and regional level.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (KINSHASA, MARCH 9-15 1986)

The report presented to the Executive Committee encouraged the pursuit of the process. "We have begun an exciting process and have entered into a new stage in our ecumenical journey". The Committee underlined the importance of a large participation of all Christians, including the Roman Catholic Church as a co-inviter to the World Convocation.
It reminds that "the JPIC process reflects the concern and responsibility of all humankind, but the churches must remember that they are only one section of humankind and their input must be very well planned".
"The Sub-committee takes note as well of the new emphases and special programmes being developed in the various sub-units in relation to JPIC".

The Executive Committee decided to nominate a group of experts to collaborate in the preparation of the JPIC WOrld Convocation.

FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATION ON JPIC (GLION NOVEMBER 7-15 1986)

The first international consultation on JPIC took place in Glion in November 1986. There were more than 50 participants to the consultation coming from various confessions and countries.
The report registered some of the present threats against justice,peace and the integrity of creation. In the face of these threats the answer of the Christians must be clear: "we believe that we are called at this time also to re-examine our lives and our priorities in order that we may be more faithful in our witness to the gospel, more forthright in expressing the hope that is in us, and more committed to joining together as churches and Christians in bold acts of witnessing to Jesus Christ as the Life of the world".
The report proposed a first step for participation in the process:
- confession of our sins;
- confession of our faith. To express in the world of today God's loving intention for God's creation;
- biblical and theological reflection leading to acts of commitment founded on common prayer;
- organisation of a World Convocation

The participants of the Glion consultation presented in a final declaration their way of understanding the "conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant)".
They underline that "the nature of such a convocation would be different from a council. It would be a gathering of the still divided church enabling the churches to speak together on a special concern. The churches participating in it should feel assured that:
- their ecclesiological convictions will be respected;
- the findings will not be declared to be juridically binding on them;
- the results will be subject to a process of reception so that the churches may work out ways to accept and to implement them in their life and witness.
This report was submitted to the Central Committee in 1987 (11).

CENTRAL COMMITTEE (GENEVA JANUARY 16-24 1987)

The Executive Committee recommended that the JPIC World Convocation be held in 1990. (13)
The Central Committee accepted the report of the Glion consultation with some further comments. It defined five theses related to the JPIC process, in particular:

- "The Vancouver call 'to engage churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to JPIC' is in essence a call to the churches to speak and act together in each place, resisting the forces that deny justice, peace

and the integrity of creation and affirming life in all these situations".

- "Such action is understood to be a faith response - to confess our faith in a way that will confront the power of death with the power of Jesus Christ as the life of the world"
- [...] "It is necessary to grasp the nature of the inter-relationship of these issues and to work on a common global response of the churches to JPIC in terms of both the confession and the action of the church".
- [...] The Churches "need to draw upon the resources of other faith traditions and ideologies that have important perspectives on JPIC and to collaborate with these organizations and movements for the realization of justice, peace and the integrity of creation".

Moreover the Central Committee declares that:
"The 1990 World Convocation for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation is a decisive step towards fulfilling the mandate of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver. It marks an important stage on the road towards common and binding pronouncements and actions on the urgent questions of survival of humankind". (12)

"Stress is placed on the participation of the Roman Catholic Church on a local, national and world level, though the process itself should not depend on the formation of a separate body".

Concerning the phrase "conciliar process" the Committee explains that it "refers to the way or ways in which conciliar fellowship may be articulated in our time. Nevertheless, we must recognize the fact that we have not yet attained the goal of 'conciliar fellowship', which would be the 'presupposition for calling, celebrating and receiving a council' in the strict sense of the word [...] It is to be stated clearly that JPIC is not the basis for seeking the visible unity of the church; but embarking on the JPIC process is an important part in a larger quest for manifesting the visible unity of the church".
During that meeting the distinction between the JPIC process and the World Convocation - which is a step in the process - was clearly stated.

CREATION OF A JPIC OFFICE IN GENEVA

The responsibility of the JPIC process was originally conceived as being shared among the various WCC units, but since the 1984 Central Committee it was lodged within Unit II. As the process advanced it became necessary to hire a person to coordinate the activities of the various sub-units and to collect information on JPIC; therefore, in early 1986, Mr. Ulrich DUCHROW was appointed. In September 1987, it was decided to create a JPIC office and Dr. Preman NILES was chosen as a director for the JPIC project.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ATLANTA, SEPTEMBER 21 -25, 1987)

In Atlanta the Executive Committee was informed on the development of the JPIC process. The importance of the commitment of people's movements ,action groups and of those who are struggling for survival was underlined.
The Committee asked to the staff to draw up a list of persons who could possibly be members of a world Preparatory Group for the organization of the Convocation.
The Executive Committee envisaged two possible scenarios for the World Convocation, leaving the decision to the next Executive Committee (March 1988):
- that the World Convocation be made up of representatives from the churches, participating organizations and other advisors, with a total of around 500 people;
- or that it have the character of a theological working meeting to finalize a theological document on JPIC for the Seventh WCC Assembly in Canberra, with no more than 150 people.

GRANVOLLEN MEETING (FEBRUARY 23 - MARCH 3, 1988)

More than 60 people gathered in Granvollen (Norway) to study the theme "Integrity of Creation". There were also some representatives from the Roman Catholic Church and from other faiths (Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim and Sikh). The goal of the meeting was above all to examine the various perspectives from which you can approach the theme of creation. A final document was written. Its primary concern was to provide ways of entering into an ongoing discussion and does not appear as a detailed study on the subject. (13)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (ISTAMBUL, MARCH 7-12, 1988)

The Executive Committee recommended that a Preparatory Group for the World Convocation be constituted. Its members are partly the members of the group of experts created in Kinshasa.
The mandate of this group is as follows:
- to plan the programme of and organize the World Convocation;
- to help in preparing a draft statement on a theological affirmation on justice, peace and the integrity of creation; to help in identifying the major threats to life in these three areas and show their inter-connectedness and in indicating to the World Convocation forms of action and acts of commitment;
- to advise on ways in which the conciliar process of justice, peace and the integrity of creation can be further strengthened and enhanced;

The Committee acknowledged the decision of the Roman Catholic Church not to be a co-inviter with the WCC; it accepted the offer of the Roman Catholic Church to appoint a Catholic JPIC staff person to work in Geneva and to appoint representatives to the Preparatory Group.
Moreover the Committee defined some guidelines for the World Convocation, such as:
- The World Convocation will be made up of representatives from the churches, participating organizations and other

advisers with a total of 550 persons, and will conform to the WCC policies regarding balances and representation;

- The purpose of the World Convocation will be to make a theological affirmation on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and to identify the major threats to life in these three areas and show their interconnectedness, and to make and propose to the churches acts of mutual commitment in response to them;

- The World Convocation will be scheduled as early as possible but not later than the end of April 1990.
  Dr. Marga BUHRIG and Archbishop MAKHULU were appointed respectively as moderator and vice-moderator of the Preparatory Group.

MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP (CRET-BERARD, JUNE 27-JULY 2 1988)

The Preparatory Group with 50 people, among which 5 representatives from the Roman Catholic Church, gathered in Crêt-Bérard for a first meeting. The Preparatory Group proposed the place, date and the make up of the participants in the World Convocation. It also proposed some considerations concerning the theological affirmations, the link between the JPIC process and the World Convocation as well as between the World Convocation and the Seventh WCC Assembly in Canberra.
According to the Preparatory Group the World Convocation has to be:

- the place where the churches agree together to engage themselves in the struggles for justice, peace and the integrity of creation and to make that engagement evident in common confessions of faith and united actions that span confessional and geographic boundaries.

- the occasion for the churches to celebrate and witness to God's sustaining and renewing purpose for the whole creation, to highlight the movements, especially in the churches, for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and to make a common theological affirmation that brings together these three issues as a basis for making common commitments to resist the threats to life.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (HANNOVER, AUGUST 10-20)

The Executive Committee decided that the World Convocation be held from 5-13 March 1990 in Seoul, Korea.
It endorsed the proposal of the JPIC Preparatory Group with regard to representativeness and the established criteria for balanced representation: 550 participants distributed in the following way:

WCC member churches	300
Roman Catholic Church	50
Christian World Communions,regional ecumenical organizations,other (non-member churches)	100
Advisers and guests	50

Reserve for balanced representation 50

The minimum goals are the same as for the Canberra Assembly: Women 40%, Lay 50%, Youth 15%. At least 30% of the participants must be actively engaged in the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE (HANNOVER AUGUST 10-20 1988)

The proposal was made by Unit I to drop the idea of a big world assembly and to meet instead a large working committee of, say 50 members, and that the proposed acts of penitence, affirmation, intercession and commitment be made at the Canberra Assembly. The Committee rejected the proposal.
The Central Committee made some comments on the preparation of the World Convocation, in particular:

- The special characteristic of JPIC is the interconnectedness of the issues and the coherence of the response of the churches.
- It is necessary to ensure that the preparatory process and the preparatory document reflect the perspectives and experiences from local churches, national and regional ecumenical bodies and Christian organizations.
- There is a need to clarify further the various forms of mutual commitment (particularly the forms of the covenant, their meaning and ecclesial implications).
- The churches cannot avoid making commitments to justice, peace and the integrity of creation, even when there is not yet a clear common theological position on the issues. There is a creative tension between the churches' commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation on the one hand and the confessional and ecclesiological integrity of the churches on the other. This tension can be dynamic in renewing the churches.
- The JPIC Preparatory Group is urged to ensure that the theological document will carry the input from the grassroots and make sure that the materials prepared for the World Convocation and those coming after the event reach the parish level and people's movements. (14)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (GENEVA 12-17 FEBRUARY 1989)

The Executive Committee held in Geneva underlined once more the importance both of the JPIC process and of the World Convocation as a significant step in that process. Nevertheless, in the face of the financial difficulties, the Central Committee had decided that the Convocation costs could not exceed the amount of resources available. This would mean reducing the number of participants to approximately 330 instead of 550 envisaged.

MEETING OF THE PREPARATORY GROUP (BAAR-SWITZERLAND 13-20 APRIL 1989)

The Preparatory Group met for the second time in April 1989. Several decisions were taken on the programme of the World Convocation, the worship and the participants. The World Convocation will follow a liturgical flow:

Day 1: Praise and Adoration
Day 2: Repentance and Confession
Day 3: Proclamation of the Word
Day 4: Affirmation of the Faith
Day 5: Intercession
Day 6: Commitment
Day 7: Sending forth

The Preparatory Group also wrote the first official document on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, starting from our conviction that "this world belongs to God". The document has two parts:

- the foundational theological part identifies the present threats against life and calls for an answer by the Churches, which is seen above all as an answer to the covenant of the Triune God.
- the second part, entitled "Affirmations and commitments", shows God's people as a Covenant Community, which is called to embody in its life and witness the presence of the Realm of God. The affirmations of faith (God as the true sovereign over every human form of power; God's preferential love for the poor; the land belongs to God; Jesus Christ is the truth; the beauty and equality of all races; both women and men are created in the image of God; the peace of Jesus Christ; the creation belongs to God) are ordered according to a ternary structure with the profession of faith, the call to confession and to concrete commitment.

The document will be circulated to the Member Churches of the WCC, non member Churches, Christian World Communions, regional ecumenical bodies...for consultation until the beginning of October 1989. It will then be revised with the help of the received comments and will be used, in its new form, as a basis for the discussion at the World Convocation.

PRESENT SITUATION

At present the JPIC process is taking place around the world and in various churches. The quality and size of commitment varies in the regions, countries and churches (15). Morevoer a variety of meetings are organized in connection with JPIC. In the WCC the three units are carrying on their collaboration and their work for JPIC. The Pacific meeting (Western Samoa, 19 September - 1 October 1988), the European Ecumenical Assembly (15-21 May 1989), the Latin American meeting (Quito, Ecuador 28 November - 2 December 1989) are important regional steps in the process. Other meetings have already taken place or will take place at national or confessional level (i.e. the meeting of African women in Ghana from March 27 to April 2 1989) (16).
The Orthodox Church organized two seminars on JPIC (Sofia, October 1987; Minsk 4-12 May 1989). The World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) published a document on JPIC, which will be discussed during its General Council in Seoul,in August 1989. The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) also chose

this theme for its 8th General Assembly, which will be held in Brasil (Curitiba, 30 January - 8 February 1990). The Roman Catholic Church produced a document as a contribution to the theological discussion on JPIC.

PARTICIPATION OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Central Committee, in its 1985 meeting, desired that, in the JPIC process, the WCC should seek the collaboration of the Roman Catholic Church through the Joint Working Group. That question was brought up during the session of September 1985.
It was then decided that the Secretariat Promoting Unity among Christians and the Pontifical Commission Iustitia et Pax would send some observers to the meeting of Glion, in November 1986.
The 13th of January 1987, Dr. Emilio Castro wrote an official letter to Card. Willebrands to propose, in the name of the Central Committee, that the Roman Catholic Church be co-inviter to the JPIC World Convocation. The Secretariat Promoting Unity replied immediately stating its great interest in that collaboration. Nevertheless a working group constituted by some of the heads of the Secretariat and of the Commission Justitia et Pax was appointed to study more carefully the mode of participation in the World Convocation of the Roman Catholic Church. Later on many contacts were taken between the Vatican and the WCC.
The 18th of December 1987 Cardinal Willebrands communicated to Dr. Castro the answer of the Roman Catholic Church concerning its participation in the preparation of the World Convocation. He said first of all that the Roman Catholic Church could not accept to be co-inviter to the convocation, due essentially to the different nature of the two bodies, one being the Roman Catholic Church and the other the World Council of Churches.
On the other hand he clearly expressed their wish to collaborate with the WCC in this important project as much as they possibly can. They proposed the following mode of collaboration: appoint a Catholic representative to work closely with Dr. Preman Niles and the JPIC office in Geneva; nominate Catholic participants in the Preparatory Group. The WCC Executive Committee in Istanbul accepted that proposal.
During his visit to Austria the Pope spoke about the participation of the Roman Catholic Church in that initiative of the WCC: "In this context also belongs the 'Ecumenical World Dialogue for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation' for which the World Council of Churches has issued invitations. The Catholic Church is involved, without being a participant, in a suitable way through well-informed representatives at this discussion. I hope that the common obedient hearing of the word of the Sacred Scripture will make it possible to speak together with words of direction for our time to such a central question for the future of mankind and creation" (17).

(1) Fanö Conference (Danemark), August 28, 1934 in : D. Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, Harper & ROw, 1965, p.291.

(2) Preman Niles, "Covenanting for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation", in : *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 39, Nr. 4, October 1987.

(3) *Gathered for Life*, Official report, VI Assembly WCC Vancouver, Canada 24 July -10 August 1983, ed. D. Gill, WCC Geneva 1983, p. 89.

(4) *ibid.* p. 255

(5) Ans J. Van der Bent, *Vital Ecumenical Concerns*, WCC Geneva 1986, p.138.

(6) *Linking the struggles for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation* , CCPD Documents Nr.2 1984, p.18-20.

(7) World Council of Churches, Central Committee, *Minutes of the Thirty-Sixth Meeting*, Geneva 9-18 July 1984, p.48.

(8) Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker, *Die Zeit drängt*, Hanser Verlag, München, 1986.

(9) see the preparatory documents for the European Assembly in Basel (15-21 May 1989), organised jointly by the Conference of European Churches (CEC) and the Council of European Bishops' Conferences (CCEE).

(10) World Council of Churches, Central Committee, *Minutes of the Thirty-Seventh Meeting*, Buenos Aires, 28 July - 8 August 1985, p. 47.

(11) World Council of Churches, Central Committee, *Minutes of the Thirty-Eight Meeting*, Geneva, 16-24 January 1987, Appendix VII, p.136.

(12) *ibid.* p.50.

(13) *Integrity of Creation, an Ecumenical Discussion*, Granvollen, February 25- March 3, 1988, ressource materials 3.2.

(14) Minutes of the Thirty-Ninth Meeting of the Central Committee.

(15) WCC Central Committee, Hannover 10-20 August 1988, Document Nr. 2.2.1.

(16) cf. JPIC Progress Report: a regional survey (May 1989)

(17) *Osservatore Romano*, English edition, September 5, 1988.

Library & Archives
World Council of Churches
150 Route de Ferney
CH-1211 Geneva 2
www.library.wcc-coe.org

JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Resource Materials 6.6

Rainbow's End?

God gave us the radiant rainbow
The splendour and spectrum of love,
The message of Covenant mercy,
The olive-leaf borne by the dove

We clutch in our terror and trembling
This delicate blue crystal ball;
Now high with the pride of possession;
Now desolate dread of its fall

For we are the first generation
whose merciless scorning of love,
has the science to shatter all rainbows
the strength to destroy every dove

The power to wither the olive
To cancel the promise of peace,
To order that Seedtime and Harvest
And Summer and Winter SHALL cease.

O Lord come again to your People
Forgive us and cleanse us we pray
that purged by the fire of your Spirit
We may waken to see your new day

Come shatter our foolish delusions,
Cultivated within us from birth,
That we can be safe or be happy
At the cost of the rape of the Earth.

Come teach us afresh in this end-time,
The lore and the lesson of love
That to cling to our life is to lose it
To give and to trust, is to have.

Come show us afresh in our yearning,
The truth of your Cross and your strife,
That Easter is not for our earning,
That love is the lesson of life.

Kenyon E Wright
Scottish Council of Churches

CHRIST OF THE BETHLEHEM STABLE -

BE BORN AGAIN IN OUR VULNERABILITY & WEAKNESS

CHRIST OF THE DESERT WILDERNESS -

STRENGTHEN US TO REJECT THE LURE OF POWER AND WEALTH

CHRIST OF GALILEE -

WALK WITH US IN THE WAYS OF OUR LIVES,
AND SHOW US YOUR WAY

CHRIST OF THE GETHSEMANE GARDEN -

WEEP WITH US THAT WE MAY WATCH WITH YOU

CHRIST OF THE CROSS OF CALVARY -

GIVE US TO SHARE YOUR SUFFERING FOR OTHERS

CHRIST OF THE EMPTY TOMB -

GIVE US TO SHARE THE JOY OF YOUR LIFE

CHRIST, SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD -

WELCOME US INTO YOUR KINGDOM ON THAT DAY
WHEN EUROPE AND ALL THE NATIONS,
CLEANSED OF ALL THAT IS UNCLEAN,
BRING THEIR TRUE WEALTH INTO THE CITY,
WHERE THE RIVER OF LIFE FLOWS
AND WHERE THE LEAVES OF THE TREE
ARE FOR THE HEALING OF THE NATIONS

Kenyon E Wright
Scottish Council of Churches

JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

Resource Materials 6. 7

EUROPEAN ECUMENICAL ASSEMBLY PEACE WITH JUSTICE
Basel, May 1989

Note for information

D O C U M E N T A T I O N

In response to requests for documentation on the European Ecumenical Assembly PEACE WITH JUSTCIE, please note the following information:

1. Message and final document

The final texts of the Message and of the Document are available at the following addresses:

Engish/French/German:

Conférence des Eglises Européennes
150, Route de Ferney
Case postale 2100
CH-1211 Genève 2

Consiliarum Conferentiarum
Episcopalium Europae
Klosterhof 6b
CH-9000 St. Gallen

Translation into Russian, Spanish and Italian are available at the following addresses:

Russian:

Département des Affaires Extérieures
S.Exc. Métropolite Philaret de Minsk
Danilov Monastyr
22, Danilovsky val.
URSS-113 191 Moscou

Spanish:

Conférence Episcospale d'Espagne
Att.: Secrétaire
Anasto 1
E - 28033 Madrid

Italian:

Centro Interconfessionale per la Pace
(CIPAX)
M. Gianni Novelli
Via Accialoli 7
I - 00186 Rome

2. Publication of acts, texts and documents of the Assembly

The organisers of the Assembly (CEC and CCEE) have asked several publishing houses to publish all the documents of the Assembly: texts, speeches, group reports, message, final document, etc.

The following publishers will produce the books hopefully by early Fall 1989:

English: The British Council of Churches
Inter-Church House
35-41 Lower March
GB - London SE1 7RL

French: Les Editions du Cerf - Paris
29, bd. Latour-Maubourg
F - 75340 Paris Cédex 07

German: Friedrich Reinhard Verlag
Missionsstr. 36
CH - 4012 Basel

The books will also be on sale in bookshops.

3. Other books on the Assembly

English: The World Council of Churches will publish a book by Jonathan Fryer, a well-known journalist in London.

French: "Labor et Fides" in Geneva will publish in its collection "Entrée libre" a book by Pasteur Jean-Marc Prieur, Director of Le Cep, delegate of the "Eglise Réformée de France" in Basel.

German: F. Reinhard (Basel) and Benzinger (Zürich) will publish a collective book "Gerechtigkeit und Frieden umarmen sich" which through several authors will present various aspects of the Basel Assembly (photos and texts).

The books will be available by early Fall in bookshops and by the publishers.

4. Photos

Photographs taken during the Assembly: worships, plenaries, peace march, Workshop for the Future of Europe, etc. can be ordered from:

Conseil oecuménique des Eglises
Service photos
150, Route de Ferney
CH - 1211 Genève 2

DRAFT: FOR DISCUSSION AND COMMENTS TO BE SENT TO THE WCC JPIC OFFICE
NOT FOR QUOTATION OR ATTRIBUTION

Library & Archives
World Council of Churches
150 Route de Ferney
CH-1211 Geneva 2
www.library.wcc-ccc.org

TOWARDS AN ECUMENICAL THEOLOGICAL AFFIRMATION ON JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

FIRST DRAFT FOR THE WORLD CONVOCATION ON JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES.
6 - 12 MARCH 1990.

World Council of Churches - 150, route de Ferney - 1211 Geneva 2, Switzerland

PREFACE

The Vancouver Assembly requested the WCC "to engage member churches in a conciliar process of mutual commitment (covenant) to justice, peace and the integrity of creation". The Buenos Aires (1985) and Geneva (1987) Central Committee meetings agreed that the invitation be broadened to include the Roman Catholic Church, Christian World Communions and regional ecumenical organizations. Consequently, there is now a plurality of responses to this invitation, from churches and World Christian bodies.

The World Convocation on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, which is to take place in Seoul, Korea, 6-12 March, 1990, is the main global event that will span both confessional and geographical boundaries. With regard to the relationship between the process initiated at Vancouver and the World Convocation, the Geneva Central Committee (1987) said, "The 1990 World Convocation for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation is a decisive step toward fulfilling the mandate of the Sixth Assembly of the WCC in Vancouver. It marks an important stage on the road towards common and binding pronouncements and actions on the urgent questions of survival of humankind."

The WCC Executive Committee meeting in Istanbul, Turkey (March 1988) said:

> The purpose of the World Convocation will be to make theological affirmations on justice, peace and the integrity of creation and to identify the major threats to life in these three areas and show their interconnectedness and make and propose to the churches acts of mutual commitment in response to them.

The JPIC Preparatory Group for the World Convocation, which includes representatives of WCC member churches, the Roman Catholic Church, Christian world communions and regional ecumenical bodies, met for the first time in June 1988. It interpreted the purpose of the World Convocation as follows:

> "(i) To be the place where the churches agree together to engage themselves in the struggles for justice, peace and the integrity of creation and to make that engagement evident in common confessions of fait and united actions that span confessional and geographical boundaries.
>
> (ii) To be the occasion for the church to celebrate and witness to God's sustaining and renewing purpose for the whole creation, to highlight the movements, especially in the churches, for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, and to make a common theological affirmation that brings together these three issues as a basis for making common commitments."

The present document is the result of a process of study and reflection, beginning with a consultation in Montreux (November 1988). The working

paper produced at the consultation in Montreux was circulated for comment, then revised and presented as the basis for discussion by the Preparatory Group in April 1989. Using the revised working paper as the basis, the Preparatory Group has prepared this present text as a draft of the theological affirmation referred to above.

This draft of the theological affirmation is now being circulated for study and comment to all WCC member churches and Central Committee members, to other churches and organizations invited to the World Convocation and other interested parties.

The document can be reproduced and further circulated by any who receive it. Comments and criticisms are requested and should be sent to the WCC JPIC Office in Geneva by 15 October 1989. The revised and final text of this "foundation document" will then be prepared and issued by the Preparatory Group in November.

It is expected that the document will be studied by the participating churches and organizations and by all the participants in the Seoul Convocation.

The Convocation will not be asked to approve or adopt the foundation document (Part I which follows), but may make its comments on the text. The primary task of the Convocation will be to make its own affirmations and commitments for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The draft affirmations proposed by the Preparatory Group are found in Part II. These will also be revised in the light of comments received in the coming months and will be circulated with the final text of the foundation document.

The Preparatory Group has also suggested four possible issues on which the Convocation may decide to covenant together for action: (i) the international debt crisis, (ii) "total security" strategies, (iii) the "greenhouse effect", (iv) a new quality of koinonia and diakonia in the churches. Readers are also encouraged to make comments and suggestions on this matter and /or propose other issues for covenanting or commitments which will be considered by the Preparatory Group in finalizing its recommendations to the World Convocation.

D. Preman Niles
Programme Director, JPIC

PART I

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The world belongs to God.

   Today, God is calling the churches to embrace and confess this truth.

   Inequities and human suffering are becoming entrenched throughout the world: in such a time, the churches are called to incarnate God's justice.

   Wars and rampant violence threaten to destroy the world: in such a time, the churches are called to make manifest the peace of Christ.

   The world's fabric of life is being torn to shreds: in such a time, the churches are called to make known and work for the integrity of creation.

   Today, God is also calling the churches to repent: to turn away from the powers of death and to make decisive commitments to justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

   The churches are beginning to hear God's call and to respond.

   This world belongs to God.

2. Today, people all around the world are encountering the God revealed in the Bible. In clear and powerful ways, they are meeting the God of love, justice and life. God hears the cries of the victims. God hears the groaning of the creation. God sees the misery of those who suffer. God comes to free the oppressed. This is the God whose own son, Jesus Christ, came to share the burdens of the people, bore our pain on the Cross, and rose again, overcoming enmity in the glorious victory of life over death.

3. God is still creating and sustaining the creation. The Holy Spirit is freeing the creation from its bondage to decay and setting at liberty the children of God.

4. Through the ages, God has called out and gathered together a faithful community. God still calls and empowers us to join in the labour of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

5. God leads us into new, loving relationships with one another and with the created world, promising a new heaven and a new earth.

6. However, from time immemorial, human beings have sought to usurp God's sovereignty through their own individual and collective greed and lust for power. It is not surprising that this sin should exist also in our

time. But never before in history have the powerful had in their hands such massive scientific, technological and economic power that can be used to exploit, and even to destroy whole peoples and the creation itself. Structures have been put into place which have run out of control.

7. Even the churches -- called to be God's instruments for justice, love and life -- have too often allowed themselves to become entangled in these webs of greed and abuse of power.

8. Churches and Christians in every local community, in every land and nation, and across the world are being called to reaffirm their faith in the God of life, justice and peace. They are called to confess and renounce their alliance with those principalities and powers who grind the face of the poor in the dust and strike lethal blows against the creation.

II. IDENTIFYING THE THREATS TO LIFE IN THE PRESENT AGE

II.1. A Threatened World

9. Perilous threats face the life of the world today. Consider these realities:

- every minute, the nations of the world spend 1.8 million US dollars on military armaments;

- every hour, 1,500 children die of hunger-related causes:

- every day, a species becomes extinct;

- every week, during the 1980's, with the exception of the period of the Second World War, more people were detained, tortured, assassinated, made refugee, or were in other ways violated by repressive governments than at any other time in history.

- every month, the world's economic system adds over 7.5 billion US dollars to the catastrophically unbearable debt burden of over $1,500 billon now resting on the backs of the people of the Third World;

- every year, an area of tropical forests three quarters the size of Korea is destroyed and lost;

- every decade, the sea level will rise by about 1.5 metres as a result of present global warming trends, portending disastrous consequences for our planet and especially for the coastal areas.

These realities illustrate humanity's profound violations of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

II.2. The Reign of Injustice

10. The catastrophic debt of Third World countries now totals over 1,500 billion US dollars. This debt is, however, primarily the consequence of an unjust world economic order, which keeps the South in economic bondage, gives unfair trade advantages to Northern economies, and guarantees a net flow of money from South to North, from debtor countries to creditor nations. This system also provides a mechanism by which the North can continue to impose its political and economic agendas on the indebted nations. Although the debt crisis is affecting the North through unemployment, it has become a matter of life or death for poor people in many Third World countries.

11. The lives of millions of people throughout the world are presently threatened by deprivation, much of this the consequence of the debt crisis. UNICEF reports that 40,000 childen die each day from hunger-related causes, and 30 million people die each year from undernourishment. Even as poverty increases in the Third World nations, western countries are also experiencing the so-called "new poverty". Recent studies indicate that at least 50 million people in Europe can now be characterized as poor. In Western Europe as well as in North America, churches have opened "soup kitchens" and "food pantries" to provide poor people, and especially the growing number of street people, with a minimum of food necessary for their survival.

12. A twelve year old Korean girl, who lives in a slum section of Seoul, poignantly characterizes, in poem form, the face of poverty within a relatively well off country:

My mother's name is worry,
In summer, my mother worries about water,
In winter, she worries about coal briquets,
And all the year long, she worries about rice.

In daytime, my mother worries about living,
At night, she worries for children,

And all day long, she worries and worries.

Then, my mother's name is worry,
My father's name is drunken frenzy,
And mine is tear and sigh.

13. But it is not the pathos of this data and testimony alone that is the scandal. The scandal is that the impoverished co-exist with those who live in unprecedented affluence and opportunity. Poverty amidst plenty, with the gap becoming greater: this is the scandal which threatens the life and dignity of all humanity in our present age. It must be stopped.

14. The relation between the debt crisis and poverty and hunger provides a clear example of the way in which justice, peace and the integrity of creation are interconnected. Justice is violated because vulnerable groups, especially women and children, are bearing the major cost of the

debt crisis. Moreover, national priorities of Third World countries are distorted because the foreign debt gives leverage to the North to press its political and economic agenda on the South.

15. Peace is threatened because the debt crisis undermines fragile democracies. Repayment forces governments to take highly unpopular measures, almost inevitably requiring dictatorial policies. It is also estimated that 20 percent of foreign loans have been used by repressive regimes for the increased militarization of their societies. In addition, in order to secure hard currencies, some debtor countries have developed arms export industries.

16. The integrity of creation is threatened because, in order to repay its debt, the South must increase its exports. Often, this has brought marginal land under cultivation, increased reliance on chemical inputs, and damaged fragile ecosystems. With equally disastrous consequences, rain forests are being cleared in order to get more land for cultivation. Not only are many plants and animal species being destroyed, but the very life and culture of indigenous peoples are also being severely threatened. Some countries in the South have also accepted toxic waste from the North because it brings them payments in hard currencies.

17. The credibility of our Christian witness is at stake in the face of the present economic and monetary system, which has resulted in the international debt crisis and massive poverty and hunger throughout the world. The basic test for any economic system is how it affects the position of the "brother and sister in need" (1 John 3:17). In its discernment, churches should manifest the clear bias evident in the Bible - God's preferential love for the poor. The churches dare to judge the well-being of the creation and humanity by the condition of those with the least power, the victimized and the oppressed.

18. By their very origin the goods of this world are destined for all. Thus, by serving justice, we rediscover the original intention of the creation and its harmony. And in that task, with the renewing power of the Spirit, we must strive to overcome selfishness and the "structures of sin" created by it.

II.3. Violations of Human Rights

19. Human dignity is threatened everywhere. There is increasing violation of human rights all over the world. The dominant and oppressive powers violate people's rights in manifold ways. Civil, political, cultural, ethnic and religious rights of people are under continuous threat.

20. The number of countries in which gross and systematic violations of human rights occur is on the increase. The extent of violations of human rights in several countries is still unknown to the international public. People suffer arbitrary arrests, torture, summary executions and disappearance on an unprecedented scale in our time.

21. Struggles for the rights of self-determination of peoples, nationalities and ethnic groups are intensifying, but are being ruthlessly suppressed.

There is a resurgent will to affirm the identity of nationalities, but the present power structures use the repressive apparatus against them. This has resulted in massive violations of human rights in many countries.

22. In the face of these violations, we need to affirm that God wills a society in which all can exercise full human rights. All human beings are created in God's image, equal, infinitely precious in God's sight and ours. Hence, the struggle for human rights is a fundamental response to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

II.4. The Sin of Sexism

I am a broken reed, airy nothing,
devoid of dignity
dignity of a woman.

I am a slum dweller,
an "anti-social element".
You say, I make your city dirty.
Another violation of my fundamental rights
not questioned by anybody.

What are human rights to me?
My humanness is abolished.
I wait near the water tap even after midnight
for a pot of water.
My life is cheap,
My time is cheap,
My dignity is cheap,
My labour is cheap.

(IMAGE: Christ and Art in Asia, No. 88, 1987)

23. Although situations vary among countries and regions of the world, women share a common struggle: they all suffer from often blatant violations of their personhood because of sexism. In most cultures, women are less highly valued than men and are accorded less respect. Men assume the right to determine the values of the society, requiring women to play subordinate and often subservient roles. Women suffer especially when issues of class and race are added to the oppressive power of sexism. In such situations, women find themselves at the bottom of the hierarchical social order: they receive less love and attention as babies, less education as girls, fewer options for employment and less pay as workers, less food as family members, less justice in the courts, fewer opportunities in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

24. A recent United Nations' report noted that "women make up half the world's population, work almost two-thirds of all man-hours (sic), receive a tenth of the world's income and own less than a hundredth part of the world's wealth". Poverty does not affect men, women and children in the same way. In all parts of the world, the percentage of women belonging to the poorest sectors of society is growing dramatically. Economists today speak of "the feminization of poverty".

25. In every country of the world today, girls and women are recruited and purchased by men for sexual use, social status or reproduction. Many women, particularly from the Third World, have to offer themselves as mail-order brides or are driven into prostitution as a way out of unbearable economic pressures. When judging this situation, churches need to be aware of the economic and structural reasons. Women are also endangered every day by rape, battering and other forms of assault and harassment. Furthermore, advertising practices cynically contribute to women being reduced to sexual objects that can be purchased like other goods.

26. Women themselves interpret this situation as the result of patriarchy, which places all authority and power in the hands of men, to the detriment of women's dignity and participation in all spheres of life. This situation not only dehumanizes women but also men, robbing both of the opportunity to develop together a liberated humanity.

27. Many women in our churches feel ashamed and disappointed that such discrimination and oppression is also part of our Judaeo-Christian heritage. They are sad that our churches have not overcome a situation which denies the biblical affirmation that both women and men are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). Women are still waiting for the churches to denounce the sin of sexism; to support actively the struggles of women against all violation of their personhood; and to redress sexist attitudes in their own midst, thus providing opportunities for women to bring all their gifts into the life and work of the churches.

28. In his ministry, Jesus confronted the sexism of his own society by calling women into full discipleship. Women contributed in different ways to the building up of the Christian community in the first centuries. That is why Christian women today claim space and opportunities to bring their experiences, their theological thinking and their spirituality into the full life of the body of Christ. Churches confess that Christians are called to affirm the full humanity of both women and men (Galatians 3:28). Thus they must support women in their struggles, and the member churches of WCC have committed themselves to do so by launching the "Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women".

II.5. The Tenacity of Racism

I tear my hungry babe from my breast
To come and care for yours.
Your's grow up fine,
But, oh God, not mine.
From school and beach yours I fetch
And wonder if school mine did reach.

Your man comes home at night
A welcome and delight.
Wineglass in hand,
Red chair in front of fire bright.
To bed you go and make love.

My bed is empty and cold
For all my energy is drained away.
My man and I too soon feel old.
Can you still look me in the eye
And ask me what's wrong
After you've stripped me to the bone?

You win and take everything I own
And still you want my home.
What have I done that you won't leave me alone?

29. Titled "Leave me Alone", this poem by Gladys Thomas, a black South African woman writer, expresses the daily life experience of many black women in her country. It is illustrative of the tenacious and devastating force of racism, robbing millions of their dignity, and even their lives.

30. In societies throughout the world, racism continues to violate the fundamental rights of vast numbers of people through education, religion, legislation, the courts, as well as through terminology, custom and taboos. In our present age, racism remains the cause of massive and unimaginable perversity and violence. We confess that, in many of our churches, especially in those of European background, racism has been rooted in a deep and even idolatrous belief in white supremacy. This continues to be so in subtle and even open ways, although the ecumenical community has rejected the theological support of racism as heresy.

31. Classical racism, namely the oppression of black people by white people, is persistently evident throughout the world, and has its ongoing effects in the USA and Europe. The clearest manifestation of classical racism is found in South Africa, where a minority white government continues, with impunity, to impose its harsh apartheid policies on the majority black population. The crisis there is worsening. People continue to be denied the right to participate in the political process. Every constitutional change since 1983 has only served to alienate blacks from one another and prevent the creation of a common, just and peaceful society. Non-violent resistance to apartheid is increasing. But the response of the apartheid regime to non-violent measures is often violent. It is now obvious that the apartheid regime cannot be reformed; it can only be dismantled.

32. The violence of the apartheid regime in South Africa raises for the churches the whole question of legitimate and illegitimate authority. In the past 400 years, the churches, by and large, have accepted without much dissent the legitimacy of all political authority, including repressive authority. Although traditional church-state theology accepts in theory a doctrine of "just resistence", churches have often limited themselves to the condemnation of the violent "excess" of repressive regimes, without questioning their right to govern. In many cases, this has meant that churches have unwittingly given these regimes tacit approval to use violence in order to maintain law and order, while, at the same time, telling the victims of these systems that they have no legitimate right to resistance and civil disobedience against such

violence. However, such a stance is being challenged, particularly by Christians living under repressive regimes such as that in South Africa. Such challenges are forcing a rethinking of the perversion of traditional church-state theology, especially on two related issues: the question of legitimate and illegitimate government authority, and that of unjust authority. If the churches want to participate meaningfully in the debate on violent and non-violent resistance, they will first have to deepen their perspectives on legitimate and illegitimate political authority in the light of God's justice and the coming fulfillment of God's reign.

33. Racism is also increasing in pernicious ways throughout the world against many other groups and peoples, especially migrant workers, immigrants, refugees, foreign students and the people formerly called "gypsies". Within some countries, there is also an increase in racial conflicts among different cultural and linguistic groups, the victims of which often are ethnic minorities. The ever-recurring sin of anti-semitism also continues.

34. Racism, supported by powerful political, economic and military forces, also continues to threaten the land, culture and lives of indigenous peoples throughout the world. Among these are the tribal peoples of the Indian sub-continent; Native Americans and Inuits in North, Central and South America; Pacific islanders including the Maori of New Zealand, and the West Irian peoples of Indonesia; Australian, Malaysian and Taiwanese Aborigines. All suffer increasing assaults upon their lives and sacred traditions. Although "development" and "national security" are reasons given for rejecting the land rights claims of Indigenous peoples, the core cause of their oppression is racism. The unjust theft of their original lands, as well as their continued and increased oppression by dominant powers, causes them extreme spiritual, psychological and physical suffering.

35. The Gospel confronts racism in its form and essence as idolatry. Racism fosters a false sense of supremacy. It rejects the common humanity of all human beings. It denies the reconciling work of Christ's life, death and resurrection. It systematizes oppression, domination and injustice. As such, the struggle against racism, wherever it is found, is a responsibility laid upon the churches by the Gospel of Jesus Christ in every country or society.

II.6. Wars and Rumours of War

36. The world in which we live is not a world at peace. This is so despite significant and hopeful changes in the geo-political situation in recent years, especially the improved relations between the two superpowers, the elimination of one category of nuclear weapons, and some positive steps towards peace in various regional conflicts.

37. Wars are raging throughout the globe in ever increasing numbers. Most of these conflicts are racial, ethnic, tribal, religious or ideological; and they are proliferating, both within nation-states and regionally, causing incredible suffering and loss. Eighty percent of those who have died in these wars are civilians. Modern war has become essentially indiscriminate.

38. At the same time, humanity and all of the creation continue to live under the shadow of "the Bomb" and the spectre of the "Final Event". A world with 55,000 nuclear weapons, whose combined destructive force is 16,000 megatons (16,000 million tons of TNT equivalent), is a world still on the brink of self-extermination. Since 1983, the two superpowers have increased their already enormous stockpile of nuclear weapons, and even now are aggressively continuing their testing and development of first-strike weapons. Other nuclear weapons states are also adding new weapons to their arsenals. Nuclear war by inadvertence - by human miscalculation or technical malfunction - remains an ever present possibility, nor can nuclear war by design be ruled out. Any nuclear war is likely to become a terminal event.

39. World military expenditures, a major incentive to war, have also surged beyond belief in recent years. These expenditures are not accidental; they are tied to powerful military-industrial institutions with direct lines to governments. A staggering 1.8 million U.S. dollars is spent <u>every minute</u> throughout the world on armaments, a figure that has been climbing for at least twenty-five years with no end in sight. In addition, money is being spent on the development of new forms of chemical and biological warfare. Military defense budgets in the Third World are today seven times higher than they were in 1960.

40. Peace and justice issues are more and more interpreted in narrowly perceived national security interests. Within Third World countries, this often results in the imposition of martial law, official secrecy, "legalized" violence, detentions, torture and a controlled economy. A dangerous consequence of these developments is that, throughout the world, the role and nature of the military is changing: it exists less and less to serve and protect the people and more and more for its own sake. The spiraling influence of militarization is matched by an equally spiraling international arms trade, which is now quite literally out of control.

41. Behind this militarization in the Third World very often lie the interests and strategies of the industrialised states This is attested to in the recently revealed secret papers of the Inter-American intelligence and militarization conferences. The so-called "Low Intensity Conflict Strategy" (LIC), which works against all attempts of the poor and their movements to work for greater justice, includes proxy wars, vigilantes, political repression, economic destabilisation and corruption, socio-psychological terror, subtle influence by the media and dis-
information. In this way, militarization penetrates every aspect of life.

42. There is also a corresponding militarization of culture: law and order in all realms of life, the upholding of inflexible hierarchical structures, the integration of women into the structures of total defense systems, the constant repetion of pictures, the promotion of toys and sophisticated war games for children and adults, and the infiltration of language with military terms. In cities around the world violence as a way of solving conflicts is growing. There is increasing readiness to use physical power over the weaker and the powerless, even in personal relationships.

43. The militarization described above contradicts the Gospel and underscores humanity's failed attempts as social beings. The world lives in "unpeace" within a flawed communication environment: we are fragmented, torn asunder, seemingly hopelessly divided against ourselves: East and West, North and South, both within and among nations. Nowhere is this more dramatically illustrated than in the division separating North and South Korea, the place for our Convocation. That division, now more than forty years old, is the consequence of an ideological war between the two superpowers. Neither willed nor wanted by the people of Korea, the existing division has served to maintain two Koreas that are influenced by outside powers, militarized, and economically oriented toward them.

44. The churches are called to live as peacemakers amidst the world's wars and threats of destruction. It is vital for humanity's future survival to heed this call. If indeed Christ is our peace, then the churches' witness in the world should seek to break down every wall of hostility through the reconciling love of God.

II.7. Endangering Creation

> My name is Anna. I am from the Marshall Islands. My people have traditionally treasured our lands and lagoons - sources of our food. My people are a sharing people who live in close inter-dependance not only with one another, but also with our atoll homes. Now, however we are troubled. Many of our young people see no future in life. Our land no longer feeds us. The more we eat of its fruit and of the fish in our lagoons, the sicker we become. What has happened to my people? What has happened to our land?
>
> From 1946 to 1958, nuclear tests were held in our atolls. Some of these atolls have simply disappeared. Others are still slowly releasing radioactivity into our waters. While our older people are still suffering from radiation sickness, many of our children have genetic defects. We women feel this particularly; we think of our children.
>
> More recently, we have been moved from some of our atolls and crowded together on Ebeye Atoll in order that our atolls could become testing grounds for advanced weapons systems. We have no traditional link with this new land; part of our identity has been take away. Our dwelling place is overcrowded. We are poor. Our lagoon is a source of disease, not life. Yes, much has happened to our people. Much has happened to our land.

45. This story gives dramatic witness to the consequences of the modern way to "master" creation on the basis of a perverted biblical heritage: destruction of fish, forests and atolls; pollution of land and waterways; displacement of people from their sacred territory; injury, disease, suffering and death to innocent people. The story is also an example of the present widespread and potentially catastrophic destruction of God's creation.

46. Never before has the need for restoring the wholeness of creation been more urgent. The environment of air, water and earth sustains and nurtures life itself. As the environment deteriorates, life for all human and non-human beings is endangered. And when life-sustaining resources are degraded, eroded or exhausted, life itself is threatened and precarious. We are moving towards that dangerous edge in our present age. Humanity is conducting an enormous experiment with the creation, the ultimate consequence of which could be second only to global nuclear war. The following are interrelated threats to the creation which call for urgent attention by the church:

a. The "Greenhouse Effect" A dramatic rise in the temperature of the earth's atmosphere of 1.5 - 4.5 degrees (C) in the next decade, which scientists now say is likely, could result in global catastrophe. Rising sea levels and changing climate patterns could have devastating effects on millions of people. To prevent this, governments of industrialized countries must reduce the burning of fossil fuels by at least 50 percent in the next twenty-five years. Other greenhouse gases, such as cloroflurocarbons, must be rapidly replaced by safer substitutes. The development and use of alternative renewable energy resources must be encouraged throughout the world as essential to global stability. In short, every effort must now be made to ensure the safety of the world's climate and atmosphere.

b. Deforestation To date, this century has witnessed the elimination of approximately half of all the forests in developing countries. Presently, as many as 20 million hectares (five times the size of Switzerland) of forests are being lost annually. This devastation of forests across the world poses critical threats to the creation and to all humanity, but especially to people in the Third World. Since much forest destruction results from the needs of the poor for fuel and access to land, alternative fuel sources and land access must be part of the solutions to this threat.

c. Acid Rain In many regions of the Northern hemisphere, the contamination of the atmosphere, particularly as a result of the burning of fossil fuels, has already destroyed many forests and lakes, as well as human lungs.

d. Unlimited Resource Exploitation The pressure for ceaseless exploitation of limited resources underlies the threats endangering the environment. Those in power in Third World countries often press their societies towards this same goal. Yet, scientific analysis, as well as common sense, makes clear that the limited quantity of many of the earth's resources should impose constraints on their use.

e. Unbridled Bio-technology Modern society's dominance over nature has been carried to its logical extreme by recent developments in bio-technology. The invention, patenting and future industrialization of transgenic animals is a dramatic illustration of this. Even more dramatic is the use of reproductive technology: tests for sex determination and the resultant abortion of female foetuses, genetic manipulation of life to produce superior people, "surrogate" motherhood, test tube babies, etc. These again make women the objects of experiments and impose enormous pain and suffering on them. In

addition, some industrial applications of bio-technology will contribute to economic oppression in the world. For example, many exports of plant-derived commodities, such as vanilla, cocoa, oil palm, as well as countless fragrances and nutrients, can be dramatically affected by the production of these substances through the use of genetic engineering techniques by the corporations themselves. Small farmers and developing countries dependent upon income from such commodities face economic losses, which could be devastating in some cases. In addition, industrialized countries are researching the use of genetic engineering techniques for biological warfare.

We recognize, of course, that various applications of bio-technology can result in the improvement of human health and agriculture. Yet, in many ways, this technology is setting its own rules, and assuming that there are no limits to humanity's power over the created order. The churches must strongly counsel caution in all those areas of bio-technology that pose unanswered ethical questions and would result in unprecedented changes in humanity's intervention in the creation.

47. At the centre of these threats to the creation lies a fundamental breakdown in the modern worldview in Western culture. With the enlightenment and the scientific revolution, science and technology became linked together. These forces ushered in the industrial revolution and reshaped the fabric of modern life. In the process, modern culture came to assume that the course of progress, human betterment and social wellbeing would unfold naturally from the development of technology, as an unquestioned means of humanity's liberation.

48. The positive benefits of these developments for civilization are remarkable in many ways. Humanity has been given protection against many threats to life. Communication and transportation have revolutionized the knowledge accessible to millions of people.

49. But as a consequence of this same worldview, humanity has been strengthened in the belief that it has the right and the duty totally to dominate creation. Objective scientific knowledge has become the norm by which to judge all truth, and the purpose of such knowledge is to exercise power over the creation. The view of life has become secularized. Modern culture has come to understand the world apart from any reference to God and God's original purpose in creation. This means that the modern worldview is based on neglecting and perverting relationships that are crucial to our faith and to the life of the world. As a result, the creation is viewed as a receptacle for raw materials which are only given value through exploitation.

50. Technological power, together with an economic and monetary system that is based on possessive individualism, limitless accumulation of capital and consumerism, has led to a type of growth that exploits both the earth and people.

51. This is contrary to the will of God who has asked humanity to cultivate creation and to take care of it. Creation has a value of its own. Humanity and the rest of the creation need a new and redressed relationship.

52. Among two-thirds of the world's population, however, the benefits of scientific discoveries and technological revolutions have not been used in the interest of humankind. Diseases that can be prevented by modern science or treated by modern medicine still ravage humankind; famines that could be prevented by modern methods of farming kill millions of people; people's thirst for knowledge is ignored as resources are diverted to the development of methods of warfare that can destroy creation. The ideology of possessive individualism, imposed on the rest of the world through Western culture, negates the good that science and technology ought to bring to humankind.

53. If the churches are to have any role in dealing with the present environmental crisis, they must begin by recognizing the depth of the challenge. Rather than simply acknowledging immediate environmental problems which need to be remedied, the churches must confront the basic modern mindset which undergirds the threats to God's creation. Ultimately, todays's endangered environment reveals a spiritual crisis in modern humanity. The churches must counter society's faith in the utter resourcefulness of technology with warnings and with deeds which regard technology as our servant rather than our "master". Christians need a recovery of their faith in God as Creator, in the world as belonging to God, and in a reconciled relationship, through Christ, between humanity and the created world. This will require nothing short of the power of the Gospel.

II.8. Distorted Values in Commucation

54. Communication reflects the complexity and the diversity of the situation of the world. World communication networks report the best and the worst events that happen. But the tremendous responsability of the media for communication is very often miscarried with terrible consequences. The media are used for ideological propaganda and money-making. The means of communication are monopolized by international agencies or controled by powers. Truth is distorted. People are deprived of the right to information. Ethical values are all too often ignored.

55. The media should promote relationship and solidarity among the human family, provide dialogue and contribute to true information and education. Christians have a role in meeting this challenge and in working for the realization of the true purpose of communication.

III. READING THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES - THE AWAKENING OF PEOPLE

56. In our efforts to judge honestly the present global threats to peace and the environment, we, as Christians, do not overlook positive and encouraging signs. Throughout the world, there is a growing general awareness of the fundamental challenges of global injustice: the gap between rich and poor, the international debt, sexism, and racism. Likewise, many recognize the dangers posed to the environment. Also, former ideological hostilities between the superpowers have been significantly reduced. We give thanks and offer encouragement for such developments.

57. Yet, any naïve optimism that ignores the real nature of these times would betray the ground of our hope. We have not overstated the threats to justice, peace and the integrity of creation that presently grip our globe. In all truth, we live in dark and perilous times. For millions in our world, as well as for the creation, the situation is extremely precarious. But darkness faced and explored, darkness accepted and understood, is the beginning of all profound expressions of Christian hope. It allows the stones to be rolled away, and opens the pathway for God's light and life to be embraced with faith.

58. Our present situation includes both God's judgement and the possibility of renewal and new beginnings. God's judgement is on every condition, system or action which dehumanizes people or abuses creation. However, God's mercy, imposing no conditions, always exceeds God's judgment. The love of God in Jesus Christ has triumphed over the power of sin. Therefore, we can hope for change and for a new beginning. Responding to God's love, we can implement such new life. The threats to life can be identified, confronted, reversed and changed.

59. In this regard, a particular sign of hope in our time is the awakening of people themselves. Ever since the end of the Second World War, all over the world, movements of people have been challenging developments in the areas of economics, politics, militarization and ecology. They are demanding to be the subjects of their own destiny and history. They are awakened, motivated and charged for change.

60. The demand of people for participatory democracy has become a world-wide phenomenon. It is rapidly gaining universal recognition as legitimate. Participation is a prerequisite for enhancing justice in any society.

61. Despite state violence and reprisals, their demands have not diminished. The struggles of people to protect life and the environment have generated echoes all over the world; and it has been their determination for life that has often moved governments and international organizations to respond.

62. We discern clear signs of God working in history through people. Through the dedication of people, God is challenging us to resist the threats to life. Through the sacrifice of the innocent, God is calling us to repent. Through the many nameless martyrs of our time, God's pain and suffering is being revealed in human history. Through them, we hear the voice of God saying that our hope is based on the cross of Jesus Christ.

63. God is calling the churches today to proclaim and live out Christ's message of hope. We refuse to give up on the world and its possibilities for transformation. Both the victim and the victimizer need to hear that message; that the world is not fixed or settled as it is; that abusive structures can be changed; that communities of people can covenant in solidarity for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. For this world belongs to God.

IV. THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCHES

VI.1. Repenting and Confessing our Faith

64. The threats to the life of the world require Christians to confess anew our sins and our faith. We begin with repentance, for we have failed to live as though this world belonged to God. In many ways, we have participated in the structures of sin which break God's intention for the world, rather than witnessing against them and seeking freedom from their power.

65. We must begin by seeking the renewal of our own lives. For this we pray to the Spirit to touch and transform anew our local congregations, parishes, communities, and worshipping bodies. We seek, therefore, the power of conversion to change lives, root commitment, and empower witness.

66. We are concerned with more than matters of social and political ethics. Rather, our task is to confront the threats to life with the power of the Gospel - to confess our faith, both as a prophetic movement of resistance and as a proclamation of the good news of God's redemptive action in Jesus Christ as an alternative reality in human history, and beyond.

67. But confronted with this task, we find ourselves crippled and unable to respond with faithfulness and strength. We are divided not only along confessional lines but also along racial and class divisions. This betrays the vision of our unity that is offered by the cross of Christ, "who has made us both one, and broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14).

68. Yet, only by responding together to the threats to justice, peace and the integrity of creation will our voice be heard and our witness be credible. In undertaking this task, we continue on our journey for "visible unity in one faith and in one eucharistic fellowship expressed in worship and in common life in Christ, and to advance towards that unity in order that the world may believe" (WCC Constitution, article IIIa).

69. Further, we realize that some of our traditional theological positions have undergirded the disintegration of creation, condoned oppressive political, social and economic injustice, and justified destructive wars around the globe. Some examples of these theological positions and interpretations include:

    a. a simplistic separation of history from creation, as if God acts only in the history of humanity, and not also in the whole of creation;

    b. a misleading division between creation, as an initial act of God, and redemption as God's final, eschatological action, denying the biblical links between these two;

    c. some theologies of power based on a patriarchal understanding of God's sovereignty;

d. a narrow concentration on the salvation of the individual person by Jesus Christ at the expense of realizing that, through God's spirit and God's mighty acts in creation, God is bringing forth a new creation.

70. We even find parts of the churches today reminiscent of the so-called "German Christians" during the Nazi time, as they justify such notorious injustices and discrimination as apartheid, condone ruthless repression as in some countries in Latin America, and support the relentless build-up of military might. Here we have to face the issue of heresy, and the question of what constitutes the true Church. This can only be done in a spirit of humility, because we realize how much these perversions are deeply rooted in our own theology and practice.

71. To help us as Christians be freed from these distortions and empowered for witness, we should lift up again the Trinitarian understanding of the Christian faith and spirituality. As Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, God is the source of the affirmation of life against the forces of death and destruction. Creation is not simply an initial act of God the Creator, but the liberating place of God's presence and ongoing activity, providing, sustaining and protecting life. We are called to participate responsibly in this ongoing divine activity. In Christ, the Crucified and Resurrected One, and in all women and men who share Christ's life with others, God, the creator of life, identifies with the suffering and decaying creation, groaning to bear new life. Thus, faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour is linked to all dimensions of God's saving activity. The Holy Spirit, "the Giver of Life", is the dynamic presence of God in the whole of the creation, sanctifying it and providing new life.

72. From this perspective, the messianic image of the "Kingdom" or "Realm" of God is not some distant hope in time, but is the affirmation that all of the creation is being redeemed from historical realities of domination and power, in order to become the city with open gates in whose midst is the garden of life (Rev. 21 and 22), where the wolf is a guest of the lamb and a child leads the wild animals (Is. 11), and the dwelling of God is with people (Mt. 1:23; Rev. 21:1-4). While the final culmination of this vision is beyond history, we are called to respond to these redemptive promises where we live, here and now, by committing ourselves, along with others, to uphold life over against death. The whole creation anticipates, and shares in the liberation of God's children (Romans 8:19) For this world belongs to God.

73. Affirming justice, peace and the integrity of creation as an integral part of our confession of faith in the Triune God is to proclaim the Realm of God. On the one hand, this proclamation discloses the reality of the "fallen creation", umnmasking the powers of evil and destruction that are struggling against the God of life. On the other, it presents the dimension of hope that, through Christ, we participate in God's coming victory. And such hope highlights among others, the struggles of people for justice, peace, and the integrity of creation, with all their imperfections and ambiguities, as responses to the Realm of God.

74. Finally, we recognize that it is not just poor theology, or even our own divisions that have hindered our witness to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. We cry out and pray that we be freshly empowered by the Spirit. Then we can engage those deadly forces and powers that threaten the world with the transforming love and life of God.

75. It is only such a life and hope-affirming spirituality that will enable the churches to be a sign and sacrament of the community of humanity and the whole of creation with the Triune God. And only this will open up new ways for articulating the biblical vision of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

76. The call from the Vancouver Assembly, as well as the holding of the World Convocation in Seoul, presents the churches with new challenges. First, we must discern why the threats to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation have persisted and even grown more severe over the past decade. Second, we should learn how these three dimensions are woven together, both theologically and practically, into one whole. And third, we must confess our faith freshly, in the face of these threats, in order to engage ourselves in new, irrevocable, and ecumenically shared commitments, out of our faithful response to God's purpose for the world.

IV.2. Living our Faith

77. The churches live on the basis of ahope grounded in the action of God as Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, and revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. God's action is seen in the covenants which promise wholeness for the creation, the reign of justice, and the establishment of peace. Such covenants embrace the earth. They call God's people to a new future, declare the unity of humanity, and establish solidarity with the hopeless, oppressed, and powerless. They promise the Spirit's power to change people's hearts. And they are brought to full expression in Christ. The new order and way of life intended by God for all humanity and the world is set forth by these covenants. With the people of God throughout history, the churches today are called to respond.

78. Justice, peace and the integrity of creation are distinct but interrelated ways of referring to the same reality: the goodness and wholeness of life intended by the will of God the Creator. This means life in right relationship with God, life in fulfilling relationships among human beings and between human communities, and life in harmonious relationships with the whole of creation. This is the meaning of shalom.

79. This vision echoes throughout the pages of the Bible. In Hosea, for instance, we read:

> I will make for you a covenant on that day with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the ground; and I will abolish the bow, the sword, and war from the land; and I will make you lie down in safety...I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy...

> And in that day, says the Lord, I will answer the heavens and they shall answer the earth;
> and the earth shall answer the grain, the wine, and the oil,
> and they shall answer Jezreel;...
> and I will say to Not-my-people, 'You are my people';
> and they shall say, 'Thou art my God.'
>
> (Hosea 2:18-19,21-23)

80. When the Spirit of God is poured out on a sinful, troubled and suffering world, shalom becomes a reality (Isaiah 32:15). The Gospels say that the Spirit of God descended on Jesus at his baptism (Mk. 1:10; Mt. 3:16; Lk 3:22; Jn. 1:32). In him and through him, shalom, the Kingdom or Realm of God, becomes real in history.

81. Through Christ's parables and the miracles of healing, the Realm of God becomes manifest as a dynamic, growing reality, transforming political, social, economic and ecological relationships. Justice, as a fruit and sign of the Realm of God, transforms possessiveness into sharing of food and thus life (Mt. 15: 32-38); peace, as a fruit and sign of the Realm of God, transforms the power of domination with an act of healing that brings wholeness to life (Mk. 5:1-13). The integrity of creation, as a fruit and sign of the Realm of God, transforms broken relationships into life in trust and confidence (Mt 6:25-33). Although the Realm of God is yet to be realized in its fullness, it has been hidden in creation from its beginning, like the seed in the ground or the leaven in the dough (Mt. 13:31-33), for the Spirit of God was already moving over the creation (Gen. 1:2).

82. When we begin with creation, we come to understand that justice upholds the wholeness of the creation. In the perspective of the Realm of God, justice involves the righting of relationships, not only between human beings, but also between humanity and the earth and the things of the earth. Our concept of justice must shift away from one which protects possessions towards one that provides healing of relationships between human beings, between cultures, and between humanity and all of creation. Further, if we begin by understanding ourselves as a part of the wholeness of God's creation, and understand justice as upholding creation's integrity, then peace will flow naturally.

83. Just as concerned Christian people have begun to learn that true peace can only be realized through the establishment of justice and that peace flows naturally out of justice, so now we can begin to learn that justice and then peace flow naturally out of a deep respect for the creation. In so doing, we reflect both the theological content and sequence of the ancient ecumenical creeds of Christianity and show how the integrity of creation, justice and peace belong together as distinct but interrelated dimensions of the Realm of God.

84. The integrity of creation reaffirms the biblical and credal truth that "all things," whether visible and invisible, have God for their Maker. This not only implies the entire dependence of the creation upon its

Creator, but also connotes something about the worth and dignity of the creation itself, whose life is thus sustained and held dear by God, to whom it belongs.

85. Further, the integrity of creation implies that every creature is related to every other creature as part of one interdependent community. It is particularly important for human beings to learn this truth, for we have thought of ourselves as apart, above, separate from the rest of the creation. But we are part of the totality, sharing with the other parts of the creation a common dependence on the Creator. Nor are we strangers to the material world; we too are "flesh" (Is. 40:11); we too receive our life, daily, at the hands of our Maker (Ps. 104:29-30).

86. Through the One who loved "the world" (John 3:16), we are called and enabled to love and to embrace with compassion the whole of creation. Humanity is called to respond in sacrificial service to uphold the God-given integrity of creation. In such service, the churches should be prepared to work with people of all faiths and ideologies who are concerned for the enhancement of life. In a certain sense, then, the true vocation of the human person is to be the priest of creation - to stand before the Creator on behalf of all creation (intercession), and, in turn, to interpret the good intention of the Creator to and for all.

87. In such service, the churches declare that justice is God's covenant love which pervades all of creation. The Bible speaks of God <u>loving</u> justice and righteousness (Ps. 11:7; 37:28; 45:7). In return, God calls human beings to practice justice so that it may fill the earth and inform every relationship.

88. In the Bible, "justice" and its correlate "righteousness" are neither inferences from God's nature nor an ethical reflection on human virtue. Rather, they refer to the loyal, compassionate and equal relating of one to another, where "the other", not "the self", is the center of concern. This has its source in the justice of God, who relates to an enslaved, marginalized, suffering people in concrete acts of deliverance from oppression (Ex. 3:7f.).

89. Therefore, to practise justice is in turn to reflect God's justice. It is not in the first instance about claiming one's rights nor administering punishment for wrong-doing. Rather, to practice justice is to ensure that the poor and oppressed receive their due. In a prayer for the King as the upholder of justice, the Psalmist prays:

> Give the King thy justice, O God,
> and thy righteousness to the royal son!
> May he judge thy people with righteousness,
> and thy poor with justice!
> Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people,
> and the hills, in righteousness.
> May he defend the cause of the poor of the people,
> give deliverance to the needy,
> and crush the oppressor.
> In his days may righteousness flourish,
> and peace abound, till the moon be no more.
> (Ps. 72:1-4,7)

Here again, justice is what ensures the fruitfulness of the creation, and is the hope for peace.

90. When Jesus came preaching and enacting in his ministry the Realm of God - the irruption of God's sovereign, just, saving power - it was good news to the captives, the poor, the hungry, and those who thirst for justice. In the Realm of God, they saw the possibility for a new human community. They were invited to enter it, through repentance and trust, and to enjoy just relations in the Realm of God (Mt. 5:3-6). This is the promise of the new creation.

91. We, as Christians, see the inseparable relation of justice and love in the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we share in the body and blood of Christ, we say "no" to all forms and kinds of injustice and to the unjust powers of the world. Through the Eucharist, the all-renewing grace of God penetrates and restores human personality and dignity, provides the model for true human community, and celebrates God's redemptive action that reaches out to all the creation.

92. God's loving purpose for the whole of creation also provides the foundation for peace. This was revealed in Jesus Christ "as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Eph. 1:9). "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things... making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19f.). Through his death on the cross, in that supreme act of sacrificial love, Jesus Christ destroyed sin and hatred, and reconciled in one body those who were hostile (Eph. 2:16; Rom. 12:5).

93. Jesus Christ is our peace. The peace we proclaim and strive for, together with all people of good will, is not what the world usually understands by "peace". It is not just the absence of war. Neither is it the precarious security that is gained through a balance of military power. Peace with justice is concerned with overcoming hostilities, not through war and bloodshed, but through the building up of that trust and confidence between peoples and nations, that will lead to reconciliation. It is not power and might, but self-sacrificing love that is the basis of true peace. To work for such peace is to challenge the false understandings of peace that prevail in our world today and to seek for alternative approaches that will lead to true peace that will have as its goal God's gift of <u>shalom</u> .

94. As Christians we reject false approaches to peace that have brought the world closer to the brink of disaster than to a true and lasting peace. In so doing, we should also re-examine many of our traditional positions on war and peace.

95. Nuclear deterrence is not the way to peace, as many politicians and strategists have thought, but is rather the result of the tragic deadlock that nuclear armament constitutes. In no case can the future of peace be based on a system of nuclear deterrence.

96. It is necessary to set into motion a global process of peace dynamics that will lead to the abandonment of nuclear deterrence as a safe-guard

for peace and to the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

97. As Christians we also reject the "Low Intensity Conflict Strategy" of the rich and powerful which amounts to a total war against the poor at all levels - military, political, economic and socio-psychological, including international disinformation campaigns.

98. In the light of our faith, the present global military policies reveal structures of sin which have to be eradicated. Because Christ is our peace, we must denounce them prophetically and work seriously to build true peaceful relations between all the peoples of the world. The institution of war as a means of solving conflicts has to be overcome. Still more, there is the need to work for the elimination of the causes of wars so that there not be a recourse to arms in order to settle disputes.

99. It is time to re-assess our stand on the just war theory, particularly as it relates to the possession and use of nuclear weapons.

100. As Christians, our search is for a just peace which has as its goal the gift of God's shalom. This search should include the following steps:

- To be involved in the struggles for justice against all forms of oppression that lead to hostility and the denial of peace;

- To help and support those who resist the production, testing and deployment of nuclear arms and other weapons of mass destruction;

- To express our readiness to live without the false sense of security and protection of massive armaments as we press for effective disarmament;

- To support those who hold the value of pacifism and the refusal to bear arms as a genuine movement of protest against the false search for peace through military might. The right to refuse military service should be recognized by all States. Alternative peace services need to be created.

- To support international institutions and structures, such as the United Nations, which work for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and to encourage such institutions to follow relentlessly the ways that lead to mutual confidence and trust among and within nations.

101. In all conflict situations, the search for non-violent alternatives should be a priority. Non-violence is an active, dynamic and constructive way of solving conflicts. This is true not only for politics but also in daily life.

102. The dynamics of peace pass through the death and resurrection of Christ. Thus, we are led to conversion of hearts, which is a work of

the Spirit, enabling people to bear "fruits of life and peace" (Romans 8:6). To build a lasting and steadfast peace, the churches must, therefore, constantly renew the call to conversion, to the recognition of our faults and failures, and to the mission of reconciliation that Christ has entrusted to us.

103. It is in a love that forgives and trusts that we shall discover the positive dynamics capable of transforming this world of hate and wars into a world of peace. And the love proposed to us by Christ includes the love of enemies, even to the supreme gift of one's life. In this love, and through the power of the resurrection, the churches can discover the paths to peace. The biblical promise of shalom, encompassing the integrity of creation and the establishment of justice, remains at the heart of this vision of the peace of Christ.

104. By responding to the call of God, the life of churches can be opened to a fuller presence of the power of the Spirit, and embody fresh and bold ways of living that uphold God's purpose of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Then, from the integrity of their own life, the churches can speak out and resist the threats to life in our time. The churches do so not primarily as an expert in these matters, nor less out of some presumed moral superiority. Rather, they act out of a spiritually rooted concern for the whole of God's creation and in response to the vocation of being the servant church in a world that belongs to God.

PART II

V. AFFIRMATIONS

V.1. The Covenant Community

105. The Christian community is called to embody in its life and witness the presence of the Realm of God. The powerful biblical symbol expressing the nature of this community is the covenant (Hebrew "berith"; Greek "diatheke"). Rather than being an exclusive, defensive or inward-looking symbol, the covenant can be visualized as a circle of interdependence and solidarity, of mutual empowerment and sharing. The covenant reaches out and embraces the political, socio-economic and ecological realities in which the community lives. The covenant community also breaks through all national, class, racial and other boundaries as a truly ecumenical community. The covenant is on behalf of the poor, oppressed and the suffering creation.

106. In the Bible, God always initiates covenant (Gen. 9,12, 15, 17; Ex. 6, 20-24; Matt. 26:27-28). God established the covenant, makes promises, and sets conditions for the partners in the agreement. God also remains faithful to the covenant (cf. Ex. 6:7; Lev. 26:12; Jer. 7:23; Hos. 2:25). And the people are privileged to respond to God's initiatives by living in God's presence, trusting God's promises, and keeping God's "berith". In renewing the covenant, it is not God but the people who must reclaim their commitments to abide by the covenant's conditions. The choice in this is decisive: "life or death, blessing or curse" (Dt. 30:19). As the foundations sections of the document make clear, this is the biblical basis on which the call to the churches to "covenant for justice, peace and the integrity of creation" must be understood.

107. God intends that our threatened world become a community that proclaims justice, practices shalom and preserves the earth (Jer. 31:31-34; Amos 5-6; Micah 6:8; Acts 2:44-45; 2 Cor. 5:17-21): Though the world is not yet that kind of community, the Scriptures declare that one day it will be (Rev. 11:15). Indeed, the claim of Scripture is that in Jesus Christ, God's "new covenant" reign over the whole world, in all its sin, suffering and brokenness, is already established: "All things are made new" (2 Cor. 5:17; Mark 1:15). The witness of the churches proceeds from the claim to articulate, anticipate and practice that transformation which is sure to come.

108. In its witness, the churches' task is both priestly and prophetic: the churches are called both to heal the world's brokenness and to renounce and resist the powers of death. In this the covenant community does not present itself as a model of an ideal society. Rather, it lives as a seed or a light, as the salt or the leaven in the midst of the wider human community. In confessing the reign of the Triune God, it experiences that the fullness of life is gained in losing one's life, and that the hostility which is destroying life can be overcome only by suffering love. The circle of the covenant has the cross as its centre.

But the cross of Jesus Christ is the source of the covenant community's power of resistance. In the light of the cross, it enters the conflict which God wages with the powers of evil (Eph. 6:12), trusting in God's spirit who resurrected the Crucified One into life everlasting.

109. The churches affirm and celebrate all of this in the eucharist, the feast which acknowledges and proclaims our belonging to this "new covenant" relationship as the one body of Jesus Christ and, through the Spirit, opens all of life to the promises and demands of the new age: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood" (1 Cor. 11:25).

V.2. Our Common Testimony of Faith

110. God did not intend the covenant to be a "kept" secret within the churches. Indeed, the covenant's character of love and liberation, judgement and justice, surprise and security, can become clear only as it is related to the world beyond the Christian community. A theology of covenanting is not worth the effort unless it leads to witness. And such witness springs from what the churches affirm together about the God who initiates and establishes covenant.

111. In the face of the ominous threats to life in our present age, churches are urgently called to new forms of witness, in solidarity, grounded in their common testimonies of faith. By confessing their faith together, the churches declare that their identity and primary allegiance is defined in the one body of Jesus Christ. By their confessing, they also affirm that the present issues affecting God's justice, peace and the integrity of creation must be exposed and confronted by the power of the Gospel; these issues cannot be resolved solely by human strategies or pragmatic politics. The crucial centre of the churches' confessing is that Jesus Christ is Saviour and God. Whenever and however they claim and bear witness to that centre, the churches affirm that they know something about the world, hope something for the world, and expect something in the world. That is, to affirm Jesus Christ as Saviour and God anticipates the new future that is sure to come. And that is a very important affirmation for our age: to refuse to give up on the world and its promised transformation.

112. In confessing their faith, the churches engage first themselves; self-examination and judgement begin with the Church (1 Peter 4:17). This is no small matter, particularly when placed in the context of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. It means, for example, that churches and Christians must face their own complicity in those realities presently causing suffering to humanity and the creation; churches themselves bear the marks of collective sin in their own structures, theology and witness. The first object of the churches' confessing, therefore, is the renunciation of their own sins and their conversion, through the power of the Holy Spirit.

113. The churches' confessing secondly engages the powers of death in the world. Confessing Jesus Christ as Saviour and God is itself a form of denunciation and resistance that often sets the confessor against the powers and principalities. The Barmen Declaration (1934), the Theological Declaration of Korean Christians (1973), and the South

African Belhar Confession (1982) and Kairos Document (1986), are well-known examples of the prophetic nature of confessing. Confessing in this sense will always include risk, and sometimes bring death. And from such affirmations spring new and costly forms of witness: to offer ourselves as instruments for Christ's mighty work, through the Spirit, by which he calls humanity to repentance and transformation.

114. The following eight affirmations address urgent issues affecting justice, peace and the integrity of creation in our present age. The issues and the affirmations are intended for discussion at the Seoul Convocation. In no sense, however, do these eight affirmations prescribe or exhaust what the churches may choose to declare separately or together on these topics. Each church is encouraged to study, critique and revise this material. Indeed, your church, either by itself or with others, may wish to create additional affirmations related to concrete issues of equal urgency in your region. The purpose of these affirmations is to move the churches towards common faith and witness on issues that threaten the life of humanity and creation in our time.

V.3. Affirmations

115. We affirm God as the true sovereign over every human form of power. All political authority is ordained by God to serve the people. God's authority is the foundation of the people's right to justice, freedom and sovereignty. No human power may claim absolute authority over the people. The world belongs to God.

116. We call upon churches and Christians to repent of relationships with powers which set their order over justice, suppress the freedom of the people, or in other ways violate human rights. Any association or complicity with a human claim to unlimited power contradicts the churches' affirmation of the sovereignty of God.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject and denounce all forms of power, whether covert or overt, which destroy life, fracture community or violate the freedom and dignity of the human person.

116. We affirm God's love for the poor. The resources of the earth are blessed and given by God for just distribution among all people. The condition of the poor is the test of such justice (Exod. 3:7; 5:1; Luke 4:18-19). No economic system or presumption of ownership which allows unrestrained human greed to flourish or condemns people to live in poverty may be permitted. The resources of the world belong to God.

We call upon churches and Christians to confess their alliance with the present unjust world economic order, including giving moral and theological legitimacy to that order and, indeed, reaping profits from it. The pursuit of unlimited wealth is a form of idolatry which is condemned in the Bible and denies God's ownership of the resources of the earth.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject and denounce any economic system that fosters greed, exploitation, and the unbridled plundering of the earth's resources, thus contributing to massive hunger, poverty and the socio-economic insecurity of people.

117. We affirm that the land belongs to God (Ps. 24). The land is for the security and sustenance of the people and of all that lives. No power can claim the right of ownership to land that denies life to the people. The land belongs to God.

We call upon churches and Christians to repent of their role in condoning and often benefiting from the relentless exploitation of the land for profit, at the expense of the life of people. Any alliance with institutions or persons that presumes a right of ownership over land which denies life to the people flouts God's entitlement.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject and denounce all human claims of absolute ownership and sovereignty over the land.

118. We affirm that Jesus Christ is the truth (John 14:6); it is this truth that sets us free (John 8:32). God's gift of communication is fundamental to our being human in community. Yet words, by which God's reign is proclaimed, may also be used as instruments of lies, deceit and oppression. All people have the right to hear, see, read and know the truth. All people have the right to tell their own stories in order to be free. No human power may enslave the peoples' minds by denying them the right to speak the truth or know the truth. The truth belongs to God.

We call upon churches and Christians to confess their sins of reluctance to tell the truth, of hesitation to call evil by its name, and of fear of being the voice of those made voiceless. We call upon churches and Christians to repent of their failure to hear the cries of those who suffer and their complicity with those who use words and images to mask the truth.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject, denounce and counter all lies of the principalities and powers which destroy community by distorting the truth, deceive through propaganda, or seek to manipulate by promoting greed, selfishness and materialism.

119. We affirm the beauty and equality of all races and peoples. No one race is superior to any other, for every human being is created in God's image. Racism denies our common humanity and flouts Christ's reconciling, humanizing work. It systematizes oppression, domination and injustice. Every human being belongs to God.

We call upon churches and Christians to repent of the ways racism penetrates their own attitudes, structures and theology in many different and subtle forms, devouring their life, unity and credibility. Every form of racism, whether structural or personal, contradicts the churches' affirmation on human equality and dignity.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject and denounce racism as sin. Its theological justification is heretical. The struggle against racism, wherever it is found, in overt or covert forms, is a responsibility laid upon the church by the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

120. We affirm the biblical teaching that both women and men are created in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). "There is neither male nor female ... both are one in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 3:28). Women and men have an equal right to life and vocation in church and society. Every form of sexual domination is sin, and any theology justifying the superiority of one sex over the other is heretical. Women and men, girls and boys alike are children of God.

We call upon churches to repent of their hesitation to become inclusive communities in which women and men may participate equally with their capabilities and possibilities as members of the universal priesthood of all believers. We call upon churches and Christians to repent of their alliances with patriarchal structures; such structures deny the possibility of women and men creating together new relationships for a liberated humanity in church and society.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject all structures which deny equality among women and men, and to denounce all forms of sexism which illustrate and manifest these structures. Women have the right to be subjects of their own lives, and not objects of use for others.

121. We affirm the peace of Jesus Christ. This is not the peace that the world gives. Only in the peace of Christ is there true security. No claim of peace and security which threatens the lives of people, sacrifices justice or lays waste the environment, is worthy of trust. Jesus Christ is our peace.

We call upon churches and Christians to confess their sinful allegiance to the powers of death and insecurity and their uncritical acceptance of the world's strategies for peace, which foster hatred and threaten the security of the people and the whole creation.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject any justification of nuclear deterrence or a spiraling arms race as a necessity for peace, to denounce any claim of peace which disregards justice and the integrity of creation and to take with radical seriousness the non-violent example of Jesus Christ.

122. We affirm that the creation belongs to God (Ps. 24). Not humanity but God is the source, the centre and the culmination of all creation; the whole of creation is ordered to the glory of God (Rev. 1:8). It follows from this that human beings, individually or collectively, do not have the right to systematically abuse or dispose of nature for their own ends. Women and men accord with God's purpose for creation not by "dominating" nature but through stewardship of and communion with it, shaped by a loving "reverence for life". Such action will serve to promote and preserve the integrity of creation in obedience to God, for the good of future generations. All life belongs to God.

We call upon churches and Christians to repent of all alliances with values giving license to the predatory exploitation of the natural environment - the unbridled will to power, profit and progress. We call upon churches and Christians to repent of their failure to hear the "groaning" of creation, and of their slowness to recognize the

irreparable destruction of the biosphere caused by the misuse of technology and their complicity in contributing to it.

We challenge churches and Christians to reject, denounce and counter all human claims to the right of mastery over creation, all projects of modernity, or of "scientific technologigal civilization" which fail to recognize the limits of creation, and all actions born of greed, sloth or power which abuse creation. In this time of catastrophic plundering ofnature, faith in nature as God's creation must lead the churches to opposition and resistance to its exploitation and destruction by human beings. The world belongs to God.

V.4. Covenanting for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

123. Churches and Christians are called to bear witness to these affirmations as signs of God's Reign in the world. In saying this, we remind ourselves again that as followers of Jesus Christ we ourselves stand in need of transformation through the grace and power of the Triune God. Such grace and power is our only source of strength as we seek to live according to the justice, peace and the integrity of creation which are themselves gifts of God.

124. At the same time, we also recognize that our commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation involves a radical change and transformation of the present institutions and structures responsible for today's scandals in the world. The tasks which Christians take upon themselves, require, above all, faith in the Triune God. This faith makes people disciples of Christ, who follow him through the cross and resurrection. It is this faith that gives them a totally new life-orientation. We are turned from ourselves, opened to God in Christ, and thus opened to the world as renewed people.

125. The Spirit can convert us from the paralyzing impression that the world's situation is so complicated and out of control that nobody and nothing can save it. The Spirit makes us persist in the conviction that justice can be done, that peace can be established, that the earth can be protected and defended against destructive powers, and that we are empowered to do so. Thus, we must be serious about our conversion in order to be truly open to God and to the Spirit's movement in the world for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

126. The breadth and breath of that movement is presently spreading "where it wills" throughout the world, both within and outside the churches, in courageous, new, surprising and at times controversial forms of witness and action. This is seen in situations where the people are rising up in defense of their legitimate rights, dignity and freedom, and where they express the fulness of their common humanity in actions of love and solidarity with the victims of hunger, homelessness and war. Many in the churches are heralding these and other such forms of witness as a sign of hope, through the Spirit of God's faithfulness in empowering people for justice, peace and a renewed creation. The time, it seems is kairos.

127. In such a time, churches and Christians, subject to judgement, conforming our corporate and personal lives to our servant Lord, living in solidarity with the victims of our world, and always open to renewal and transformation, are called to covenant with each other and boldly witness to the coming new age in Jesus Christ; we live in tension between the "already" and the "not yet", and make our witness for justice, peace and a renewed creation to sustain hope in what is not yet (Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:20). As such, we are called to be an anticipatory community, transcending every boundary and embodying in our own common lives those features of the new age which are present possibilities. As long as we are faithful covenant partners to God, to each other and with the whole of creation we will be signs of the new age, which is surely coming and is already here. And "the powers of death will never prevail against us" (Matt. 16:18).

Justice, Paix, Sauvegarde de la Création

Gerechtigkeit, Frieden und die Bewahrung der Schöpfung

Justicia, Paz e Integridad de la Creación

정의 평화 창조의 보전

1024908

Convocation Resource Materials

World Council of Churches
JPIC Office
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland
(022) 791 61 11

WCC GENEVA
1071645697